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A Fresh Approach to the Miracle Stories in Matthew 8-9: Literary Analysis Through the Literary Technique of Matthew's Three Stage Progression Pre-Supposedly Adopted by the First Evangelist

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

A FRESH APPROACH TO THE MIRACLE STORIES IN MATTHEW 8-9:
LITERARY ANALYSIS THROUGH THE LITERARY TECHNIQUE OF
MATTHEW'S THREE STAGE PROGRESSION PRE-SUPPOSEDLY ADOPTED BY
THE FIRST EVANGELIST

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
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BY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AJSLL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
ATJ	<i>Ashland Theological Journal</i>
ATR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
AUS	American University Studies
BAGD	W. Bauer, W.F. Arnder, F.W. Gingrich, and F.W. Danker, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 7 th ed.
BW	<i>The Biblical World</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BS	<i>Biblica Sacra</i>
BT	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CC	Continental Commentary
CJ	<i>The Classical Journal</i>
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
CSCA	<i>California Studies in Classical Antiquity</i>

<i>CTM</i>	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
<i>DR</i>	<i>Downside Review</i>
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
EBib	Erudes Bibliques
<i>EvanQ</i>	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
<i>FCHBNT</i>	<i>Feminist Companion to the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HTKNT	Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>HTS</i>	<i>Hervormde Teologiese Studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JECBS</i>	<i>A Journal for Early Christian and Byzantine Studies</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>

MNTC	Moffat New Testament Commentary
NAC	New American Commentary
NCB	New Century Bible
<i>NDNT</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology</i>
NIGTS	The New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
<i>NRT</i>	<i>La nouvelle revue theologique</i>
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTM	New Testament Message
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
PC	Pillar Commentary
<i>P-EGLMBS</i>	<i>Proceedings of Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies</i>
<i>PTR</i>	<i>Pittsburgh Theological Review</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des Etudes Anciennes</i>
RNT	Regensburger Neue Tetstament
<i>SB</i>	<i>Scriptura Bulletin</i>
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studia Evangelica</i>
SP	<i>Sacra Pagina</i>
<i>STK</i>	<i>Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>TJT</i>	<i>Toronto Journal of Theology</i>
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>

<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WLQ</i>	<i>Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly</i>
<i>WWSup</i>	<i>Word & World Supplement Series</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZNWKK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZTK</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

ABSTRACT

The structure of Matthew 8-9 is very complex, and there is no unanimous understanding. If we use Matthew's Three Stage Progression (MTSP), a writing technique that is frequently found in the Gospel of Matthew, we can explain the intention of Matthew 8-9 more clearly than any other existing explanations. Matthew supposedly arranged the nine miracle stories progressively in three clusters (8:1-17; 8:23-9:8; 9:18-26). Those three clusters are divided by two intervening pericopae (8:18-22; 9:9-17). The first cluster describes Jesus as the merciful healing Messiah. Jesus heals every disease he encounters. In the second cluster, Jesus is more than that; he is the divine being who commands the nature, the demons and even sins. The third cluster concludes the narrative section by emphasizing the spread of Jesus' news.

Each cluster of Matthew 8-9 also has a MTSP structure, though the arrangement does not demonstrate the progression as clearly as the three clusters. The three miracle stories of the first cluster are arranged progressively according to the objects of Jesus' mercy as the healing Messiah: a leper, a Gentile, a woman without any request. The second cluster demonstrates Jesus' divinity through the progressive arrangement of the three stories: obedience of the nature and the demons and Jesus' forgiving of sins. Finally the three miracle stories of the third cluster are also arranged progressively according to

the development of the spread of Jesus' fame: the spread of Jesus fame, the spread of Jesus' fame in spite of Jesus' prohibition and the division between the crowds and the Pharisees.

The analysis of Matthew 8-9 through MTSP gives the advantage of clarifying the intention of Matthew 8-9: Matthew 8-9 demonstrates a progressive development of Jesus' identity. This structure shows that Matthew 8-9 was written from the viewpoint of Christology rather than Ecclesiology and the tight structure denies the possibility of thematic approaches or narrative-discourse approaches.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Heinz J. Held's groundbreaking article in 1963, "Matthew as Interpreter of the Miracle Stories," examines the evidence that leads him to state, "Matthew does not simply hand on the tradition as he receives it but retells it."¹ This investigation of Matthew's redaction has been a major issue in the study of Matthew 8-9.² In other words, the study of the meaning of the miracles in the light of the form criticism of Rudolf Bultmann³ and Martin Dibelius,⁴ the miracles found in Matthew 8-9 recognize the importance of "studying Matthew in terms of Matthew."⁵

Presuming the Two Source Hypothesis, the analysis of Matthean redaction is

¹ Heinz Joachim Held, "Matthew as Interpreter of the Miracle Stories," *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew*, eds. Günther Bornkamm, Gerhard Barth, Heinz Joachim Held (trans. P. Scott; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), 165-299, here 165.

² Many scholars have asked the same questions using different expressions. For example, Ulrich Luz describes the same idea in this way, "What is behind the liberties Matthew takes with the tradition?" ("Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis* [eds. Gerald F. Hawthorne & Otto Betz; Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmanns Publishing Co., 1987], 222). Alistair Stewart-Sykes "suggests a reading of these [miracle] chapters in the overall context of Matthew's narrative purpose" ("Matthew's 'Miracle Chapters': From Composition to Narrative, and Back Again," in *SB* 25 [1995], 55). Dale C. Allison thinks, "it is essential to let the text of Matthew speak for itself" (*Matthew 1-7* [New York: T&T Clark, 1988], 2).

³ Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. trans. John Marsh (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972) 2nd ed., 209-234.

⁴ Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*. trans. Bertram L. Woolf (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), 37-69.

⁵ William G. Thompson coined this phrase ("Reflections on the Composition of MT 8:1-9:34," *CBQ* 33 [1971], 366) which aptly applies to so many Matthean scholars, as this dissertation will illustrate in detail (My emphasis).

facilitated by the fact that of the fourteen pericopae located in Matt 8-9 all are dependent on Mark except three, which find their source in Q: Matt 8:5-13, “The Centurion’s Servant” (Matt 8:5-13//Lk 7:1-10), a [debatable] miracle story, or apophthegm; Matt 8:18-22, an apophthegm/chreia (Matt 8:18-22//Lk 9:57-62), and Matt 9:32-34, a Matthean doublet based on the Q miracle story (Matt 9:32-34; 12:22-24//Lk 11:14-15).

Table 1. Parallels of Matthew 8-9 and Mark

1 st Miracle: healing of a leper	Matthew 8:1-4	Mark 1:40-45
2 nd Miracle: healing of a centurion’s servant	Matthew 8:5-13	Q (Luke 7:1-10)
3 rd Miracle: healing of Peter’s mother-in-law	Matthew 8:14-15	Mark 1:29-31
The sick healed at evening	Matthew 8:16-17	Mark 1:32-34
Would-be followers of Jesus	Matthew 8:18-22	Q (Luke 9:57-60)
4 th Miracle: stilling the storm	Matthew 8:23-27	Mark 4:35-41
5 th Miracle: the Gadarene demoniacs	Matthew 8:28-34	Mark 5:1-20
6 th Miracle: healing of the paralytic	Matthew 9:1-8	Mark 2:1-12
The call of Matthew	Matthew 9:9-13	Mark 2:13-17
The question about fasting	Matthew 9:14-17	Mark 2:18-22
7 th Miracle: a dead daughter and a woman in hemorrhage	Matthew 9:18-26	Mark 5:21-43
8 th Miracle: two blind men healed	Matthew 9:27-31	Mark 10:46-52
9 th Miracle: healing of a mute demoniac	Matthew 9:32-34	Q (Luke 11:14-16)
Jesus’ mission travel	Matthew 9:35	Mark 6:6

Although Matthew used Markan material in writing the majority of Matthew 8-9, as shown in Table 1, he was not faithful in following the Markan tradition in these chapters.⁶ The salient differences between the miracle stories of Matthew 8-9 and its sources, the Gospel of Mark and Q, may be summarized as follows.

⁶ Some scholars such as Eduard Schweizer (*The Good News according to Matthew* [London: SPCK, 1976], 72-73) or Graham N. Stanton (*A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992], 31) think that the author used a collection of Jesus’ acts in Matthew 8-9 as he used his sayings in Matthew 5-7. However, we do not have any example of Jesus’ acts in the way that Q is shown to be plausible by the similar Gospel of Thomas. In addition, we can observe some methods in the author’s re-organization of the miracle stories from Mark, as we will show in this paper.

Collection of the Nine (or Ten)⁷ Miracle Stories in One Unit

The most basic and unique feature of Matthean redaction of his sources is his rearrangement of the orders of Mark and Q so that nine miracle stories are collected in one place, albeit interspersed with two apophthegms: Matt 8:18-22 (following Jesus) and 9:9-17 (discussion about fasting and new wine).⁸ Here we do not try to explain these changes by Gundry's argument for "editorial fatigue"⁹ or as a drain on "the reservoir of tradition" of Davies and Allison.¹⁰ Rather, Matthew's alterations to the order of sayings and narratives are shown to belong to his editorial energy and his keen interest in representing aspects of the tradition that were of great significance to his community. The alterations require exploration of their effect individually, on the cluster of pericopae, and ultimately on the message of the gospel as a whole. Matthew has created a new context in which the nine miracle stories together possess a function particular to his gospel.

The manner in which Matthew has created a close grouping of the nine miracles

⁷ Some scholars, such as E. Klostermann (*Das Matthäusevangelium*, 2nd ed. [Tübingen: Mohr, 1927], 72), B. W. Bacon (*Studies in Matthew* [New York: Henry Holt, 1930], 187-189), H. J. Schoeps (*Theologie und Geschichte des Judentums* [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1949], 93-97), J. M. Kastner (*Moses im Neuen Testament* [München: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 1967], 165-69) link these ten miracle stories with the ten miracles performed by Moses in Exodus; however, many scholars, such as D. C. Allison, J. P. Meier, J. D. Kingsbury, U. Luz and R. H. Gundry think there are nine miracle stories. The issue is how to interpret 9:18-26. It seems to be correct to think of nine because it has become traditional to combine the two miracle stories into one. Therefore, there are nine miracle stories and ten miracles in Matthew 8-9. This will be explained in Chapter Five: MTSP in the Second Cluster.

⁸ It is not strange that Luz calls Matthew 8-9 "uncharacteristic of Matthean interpretation of tradition." See his article, "Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9," ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne & Otto Betz, *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987), 149.

⁹ Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution*, 2nd ed. (W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 10.

¹⁰ Davis, W. D & D. C. Allison, *Matthew 1-7*. ICC (New York: T&T Clark Ltd., 1988), 71.

results in the sacrifice of the more “natural” contextualization provided for them in Mark’s gospel where they are spread out chronologically and geographically. Indeed, if one were to follow the timeline of Matt 8-9, the nine miracles related there would fit into only two days.¹¹ This lack of distinction in separating out the miracles chronologically shows that the author preferred the effect of grouping the miracles, even at the cost of any realistic contextualization which would demand their distribution over a period of time as we see in Mark. For example, note Mark’s introduction to the account of the Paralytic, “a few days later” (2:1; δι’ ἡμερῶν) or the context of habitual action using “(once) again” (2:1, 13, 3:1, 5:21; πάλιν), situating them between the miracle stories. In contrast, Matthew starts every pericope in Matthew 8-9 with participles (8:1, 5, 14, 16, 18, 23, 28; 9:1, 9, 18, 27, 32) only with the exception of Matthew 9:14 and 9:35. In Matt 9:14-17 (the question of fasting), Matthew uses τότε instead of participle, but this adverb has the same effect as a participle in connecting the two pericopes in a close relationship.¹² Meanwhile, Matthew 9:35 is the first sentence of the final pericope of Matthew 8-9 and

¹¹ In Matt 8:1-5, the leper might be understood to meet Jesus in the morning, then Jesus enters Capernaum where he pronounces a healing on the Centurion’s servant (Matt 8:5-13). Passing on into Simon’s house, he heals his mother-in-law (Matt 8:14-17). Only then is there a mention of evening coming (Matt 8:16; Ὁψίας δέ γενομένης). The second day begins with Jesus’ counseling of those who would follow him (Matt 8:18-22), after which he then enters the boat with his disciples and during the journey stills the storm (Matt 8:23-27). Notice that Matthew, unlike Mark (Mk 4:35) does not situate this miracle at night. Reaching the other side of the lake, he exorcizes the two demoniacs (Matt 8:28-34) and then crossing back to Jewish territory is met with the friends of the paralyzed man, a man he restores to health and whose sins he forgives (Matt 9:2-8). Right after this, he calls Matthew and attends a dinner where he defends his choice to eat with “sinners” (Matt 9:9-13). Then, after explaining why his disciples do not fast (Matt 9:14-17), he goes with the father of a deceased girl and answers his plea to raise her from the dead, but first cures the woman with the hemorrhage (Matt 9:18-26). Following this he cures two blind men (Matt 9:27-31) and exorcizes a dumb demoniac (Matt 9:32-34). Matthew closes with a summary statement about Jesus’ many healings.

¹² “When they [the tenses of the participle] stand in indirect discourse and represent the indicative, they denote time relatively to that of the main verb.” Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 454, no. 2043.

so, being a conclusion, does not need the effect of grouping.

This tendency for grouping in Matthew 8-9 demonstrates the tight link and the close relationship of each of the two consecutive miracle stories in Matthew 8-9; the author must have tried to give a close relationship to the nine miracle stories in Matthew 8-9. Therefore it is clear by the very fact that the evangelist places all these miracles in close proximity that the message he wants to convey requires it and that the intended message outweighs a more natural spacing out of the miracles over time, as Mark had done.

Many scholars interpret Matthew 8-9 from the viewpoint of relationship with Matthew 5-7, The Sermon on the Mount. It is unanimously pointed out that as Matthew 5-7 represents the words of Jesus, Matthew 8-9 illustrates his powerful deeds.¹³ Both sections are similar in that they are collections, words of wisdom in one and deeds in another.

However, two important keys to the interpretation of Matthew's intent have not been studied with sufficient detail: first, the reason for nine miracle stories in Matthew 8-9, and second, how they are related to each other.¹⁴ If the evangelist has chosen these particular miracles, and placed them in this particular order, he intended a certain new message, a special significance that was important enough to lift these nine stories from their places in the tradition. It is this important investigation that this dissertation

¹³ For example, Davies and Allison describe Matthew 5-7 as the "challenge of Jesus' words" and Matthew 8-9 as the "challenge of Jesus' deeds" (*Matthew 8-18*, 5), Meier "Messiah of Word" and "Messiah of the Deed" (*Matthew*. NTM 3 [Wilmington, DL: Michael Glazier, 1980], p.80), Gundry as [authority of Jesus in his words,] and "authority of Jesus in his deeds" (*Matthew*, 137), D. A. Hagner [the authoritative Words of the Messiah] and "the authoritative Deeds of the Messiah" (*Matthew 1-13*. WBC 33A-B [Dallas, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1993], 195).

¹⁴ This topic will be discussed in Chapter Two History of research.

endeavors to address.

Change of Order¹⁵

Along with the issue of the collection of these nine miracle stories in one place, the second issue of the changed order requires a careful reexamination.

Matthew has re-organized three different sections of the Markan source. His first miracle, The Healing of the Leper (Matt 8:1-5) relies on Mark 1:40-45. After the Q miracle of the Healing of the Centurion's Servant (Matt 8:5-13) he inserts the Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (Matt 8:14-16), dependent on Mark 1:29-30, and then Matthew inserts the summary statement which concludes Mark's day in Capernaum (Matt 8:16-17) reliant on Mark 1:32-34. That is, Matthew chose to reverse the order of the Markan miracles. As a result, of course, Matthew 8:1-4 (The Healing of the Leper) and 8:14-15 (The Healing of Peter's Mother in Law) have different contexts from those in the Markan presentation.

Again Matthew presents the Healing of the Paralytic in Matt 9:2-8, dependent on Mark 2:1-12, right after his story of the Stilling of the Storm and the Exorcism of the Two Demoniacs, which rely on Mark 4:35-5:20. This is a significant change in the order of the miracle stories of Mark, which needs detailed explanation.¹⁶ With respect to the

¹⁵ It is important to explain the change of order that Matthew 8-9 adopted in order to support the Markan priority. See Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "Matthew's 'Miracle Chapters': From Composition to Narrative, and Back Again," in *SB* 25 (1995), 55.

¹⁶ Held (*Tradition and Interpretation*, pp.242-245) and Thompson ("Reflections on the Composition of MT 8:1-9:34," in *CBQ* 33 [1971], 371-78) explain this pericope from the viewpoint of discipleship. However, C. Burger ("Jesu Taten nach Mt 8 und 9," in *ZTK* 70 [1973], 284-87) and J. D. Kingsbury ("Observations on the Miracle Stories of Matthew 8-9," in *CBQ* 40 [1978], 562) changed the theme into an ambiguous one: Jesus and Israel. Criticizing their neglecting of the triadic structure, Allison explains this pericope from the viewpoint of Jesus' authority and mercy (*Matthew 8-18*, 116). But he did not explain why this pericope was placed at the end of the second triad.

change in context, then, Matthew's order inverts that of Mark so that Jesus' Stilling of the Storm and Exorcism of the Demons occurs before he meets the Paralytic. The progression of Jesus' journey as it was intended by Mark, that Mark desires Jesus' parables taught from the boat to lead to the sailing out to cross the sea and ultimately the Stilling of the Storm, this progression is lost completely. Such changes in the progression of the stories by Matthew show a true redactional intent.

Matthew's use of the three Q passages in Matthew 8-9 also should be considered (Matthew 8:5-13: The Healing of the Centurion's Servant; Matthew 8:18-22: Following Jesus; and Matthew 9:32-34: The Exorcism of the Dumb Demoniac) with attention to Matthew's intent. The insertion of these Q materials makes the structure of Matthew 8-9 more complex, and clearly points to Matthew's intention for the use of the miracles.

Let us draw attention to the Q apophthegm found in Matt 8:18-34. With its proximity to the miracles that follow, we must ask how Matthew understands the theme of "Following Jesus."

Any theory about the special redactional intent of Matthew's understanding of the miracles in Matthew 8-9 must address the clustering, the order, the progression of miracles, and the function of the Q material.

Abbreviation¹⁷

Our interest now turns to the changes made to each miracle story. As is well

¹⁷ This section is important in identifying the character of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9. Because of the substantial alteration of the Markan miracle stories, Held does not see Matthew 8-9 as miracle stories but pronouncement stories, controversy stories or conversations ("Matthew as Interpreter," 176-177, 244-246). However, we should ask if Matthew 8-9 does not belong to the genre of miracle stories at all. See John Paul Heil's article, "Significant Aspects of the Healing Miracle Stories," in *CBQ* 41 (1979), 274-287.

summarized in Held's article,¹⁸ most pericopae in Matthew 8-9 are reduced from the original text of Mark. In fact, Held was ready to think of the Matthew miracles not as the miracles of Bultmann, but as either the paradigms of Dibelius or apothegms of Bultmann.¹⁹ According to Held, Matthew's miracle stories are contradictory to Bultmann's miracle stories in many points: 1) the suppliant is quite briefly introduced, 2) faith is expressed in the request of the suppliant, 3) Jesus replies to the request with a healing saying or action, 4) there is a brief notice that the miracle has taken place.²⁰ All these characteristics are closer to the paradigm of Dibelius than to the miracle stories of Bultmann. According to Dibelius, paradigms have the following characteristics: 1) the climax is Jesus' saying or deed, 2) the background description is limited to the primary information, 3) the story ends with Jesus' saying which "gives the whole story an immediate reference to the hearers."²¹ Here we can confirm at least similarities, if not the same identity.

Bultmann's apothegms also could be similar to the Matthean miracle stories in that some of the healing miracle stories in Matthew have a conversational form and conclude with a striking saying of Jesus.²² According to Bultmann, apothegms are "items the point of which consists of a saying of Jesus contained in a brief framework."²³ In

¹⁸ Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 168-192.

¹⁹ Ibid., 242-43; Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*. trans. John Marsh (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), 11-68.

²⁰ Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 241.

²¹ Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1966), 42-54.

²² Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 243.

²³ Bultmann, *Synoptic Tradition*, 11.

other words, the key point of an apothegm is Jesus' final saying. After all, the core factors of apothegm and paradigm are 1) they are brief stories; 2) Jesus' saying is the core, even if it deals with the miracle story.

In most miracle stories in Matthew 8-9, most backgrounds or secondary parts of the miracle stories are abbreviated or omitted. One example is Matthew 8:28-34, the story of Gadarene Demoniacs. The terrible description about the state of this possessed person (Mark 5:3-6) and his asking to follow Jesus (Mark 5:18-20) are omitted. These omissions give the effect of figuring demons, not the demoniacs, as the main character of this miracle story. Matt 9:2-8, the Healing of the Paralytic, also abbreviates Mark 2:2-5, where the author describes the faith of those who carried the paralytic. This abbreviation makes not the faith of the people but Jesus' power to forgive to sin the main theme of the pericope.

Matt 9:18-26, Jairus' Daughter and a Woman's Faith, also keeps only the simplified story of Mark 5:21-43. In Matt 9:18, Jairus' daughter is reported to be dead already, contrary to Mark 5:23 and, therefore, Matthew does not need the servants' report about the death of Jairus' daughter in Mark 5:35-36. This omission gives the impression that the miracle story itself is not the main focus of this pericope because the redactor neglected the dramatic effect of the death report. The simplified story of the woman with the hemorrhage also supports this impression. The detailed description about the woman's bleeding and her financial situation (Mark 5:26) and the vivid and long expression of the healing procession (Mark 5:29-33) are abbreviated and Jesus' simple comment replaces it: "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well. And instantly

the woman was made well” (Matt 9:22).

Through these simplified miracle stories of Matthew, we can observe that conversations between Jesus and the suppliants are emphasized, and that through this emphasis on the conversation the first Evangelist could make the miracle stories in his Gospel far shorter than the original ones in Mark. However, an important question is whether Matthew thought of these narratives as wisdom sayings or as testimonies of Jesus’ deeds. The purpose of abbreviation needs to be evaluated by the results it produces on the whole set of pericopes, for if Matthew used his authorial creativity to form the collection, it was this same imagination that explains why he would abbreviate the stories as well.

Doublets

The miracle story of “two blind men healed” in Mark 10:46-52 is used twice in Matthew at 9:27-31 and 20:29-34. The miracle story of “healing of a mute” in Q (Luke 11:14-16) is also used twice in Matthew at 9:32-34 and 12:22-24. If these two doublets are not accidental, they should be explained.²⁴ In the first case, that of the blind men, Matthew appears to have wanted to couple Mark’s story of the man from Bethsaida (Mk 8:22-27) with the Bartimaeus story, while the Exorcism of the Dumb Demoniac seems to reflect both Mark’s rather problematic and slightly magical (?) report in Mark 7:31-37 as well as the Q account of Jesus’ miracle in Q (Lk) 11:14-16.

The importance of the doublets lies in their method of repetition. If we carefully compare these two doublets, we can find different methods in using the original sources.

²⁴ Kingsbury thinks of these doublets as “Markan conflation” (“the Miracle Chapters of Matthew 8-9,” 560) and Davies and Allison as “redactional creation” (*Matthew 8-18*, 133), but they admit that both pericopes are originated from Mark and Q.

The first doublet in Matthew 9:27-31 is different in its concrete usage from Matthew 20:29-34. The miracle story in Matthew 20:29-34 is contextually more similar to Mark 12:22-24 than Matthew 9:27-31; Matthew 20:29-34 does not omit the chronological or geographical background as in Matthew 8-9. In addition, Matthew 9:27-31 added one message to its end: “Then Jesus sternly ordered them, ‘See that no one knows this’” (9:30). The two blind men, however, “spread the news about him throughout that district” (9:31). On the contrary, the miracle stories of the healing of a mute in Matthew 9:32-34 and 12:22-24 uses Q (Luke 11:14-16) in a very similar way. There is no confession of faith and no conversation typical to the miracle stories in Matthew.

Here we may ask some questions. First, why did the author take the risk of using the doublets twice? They are too peculiar to accept as careless redactions; the author must have some reasons for the use of these two doublets. Second, why did the author add Jesus’ stern prohibition of revelation of his miracle performance to other people? If the author adds something contrary to his general tendency of abbreviation, there must be some important reasons behind it. Third, why did the author not add anything about the suppliant’s faith or Jesus’ saying, which are essential to the miracle stories in Matthew? This does not fit with Matthew’s creative attitude toward the miracle texts. It seems that the author needed the two doubled miracle stories in organizing Matthew 8-9 in spite of repetition as he needed Q in addition to the Gospel of Mark. The two doublets must also be explained from the perspective of all of the nine miracle stories in order to understand the intent of Matthew 8-9.

In sum, if we reflect on all of these differences, we can easily come to the

conclusion that the author of the Gospel of Matthew must have re-created the nine miracle stories in chapters 8-9 according to a new context with a special purpose. It is natural, then, to ask why and how Matthew used the Markan text in Matthew 8-9 so differently from its original context, how he used the Q material to enhance the meaning of the whole section, and why he needed two doublets in his gospel. The answer should be sought in the context of Matthew, for there is nothing more important that we can consult than the text itself.

The second chapter of this dissertation will now turn to a historical overview of the scholarly investigation and attempts to answer the questions of the meaning of Matthew 8-9 based on his collation of materials and their contextualization. Discipleship, faith, and Christology,²⁵ which are indeed important themes in Matthew's gospel, prove insufficient to give the reasons for Matthew's choice and organization of the material. What will become apparent is the honesty of Luz' frank assessment when he observes, "its [of Mt 8-9] surface structure is quite confusing."²⁶

This issue of the structure of Matt 8-9 holds the key to understanding how the evangelist created meaning out of the material from his sources. Thus although the individual redactional changes Matthew has made on the individual components of the chapters help to support the overall meaning, that meaning is dependent on the overall significance achieved by the evangelist in the structuring of the elements and the dynamic

²⁵ Many scholars, such as Held, Thompson, and Kingsbury, analyze Matthew 8-9 from this thematic point of view. The limit of this view will be explained in detail in Chapter Two: History of Research.

²⁶ Luz, "Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of E. Earle Ellis*, ed. G. F. Hawthorne & O. Betz (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987), 155.

achieved by their relationship to each other.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF RESEARCH

Ever since the publication of Held's article in 1963, redaction criticism has become one of the main tools in the study of Matthew 8-9 and many scholars are still using this criticism consciously or unconsciously.¹ The methodology of redaction criticism presumes that by comparing the author's work to his sources, one can create patterns of differences that signal the particular interest of the author. The importance of securing the author's intent is that it indicates the particular meaning from the beginning to the end of the gospel, and also the particular significance of the sections, in their relationship to each other. In other words, the holistic understanding of the entire Gospel and partial understanding of each unit should show harmony and consistency. Without a clear understanding of the evangelist's intent in his organization of sections of his gospel, proposals about the intent of the entire gospel are little more than arbitrary guesses without proper literary controls. It goes without saying that the evangelist's reorganization of the miracle stories into the arrangement found in chapters 8-9, that he has changed the stories and their placement, reflects his particular perspective on them and on their significance for the gospel. The method needed here, however, requires a re-evaluation.

¹ Donald Senior, "Directions in Matthean Studies," in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in memory of William G. Thompson, S.J.* ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 5. See also his book, *What are they saying about Matthew?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 1-5.

The study of Matthew 8-9 has a relatively simple history, compared to other parts of the Gospel of Matthew. The reason for this is that Matthew 8-9 does not apparently show a clear structure. After the publication of Held's article in 1963, thematic approaches based upon Form Criticism had been dominant in the study of Matthew 8-9 and still with the appearance of Narrative Criticism thematic analysis was influential in proposals concerning Matthew's intent. Many such scholars have devoted themselves to polishing Held's thematic approach with little real development so that this area of investigation has remained relatively unchallenged. One problem that is not recognized in these approaches is the need to recognize the evangelist's hand in the structuring of the set in Matthew 8-9. In studies which were confined to form critical discussions, each of the miracles was examined individually as paradigms. The other main lens has viewed the miracles as part of the entire gospel narrative, especially, with the advent of Narrative Criticism in the 1970s to 1980s. Luz, for example, criticizes the "thematic" approach of Held when he states, "he [Held] is hardly concerned at all with the totality of Matthew's Gospel as the narrative frame for the miracle stories and as the key to understanding them."² Certainly, Narrative Criticism views the set of miracles in Matthew 8-9 from the viewpoint of the whole structure of the Gospel itself, but there is no analysis of the actual structure of the collection itself. It follows that without this analysis, theories of the function of the Matthean miracle set in Matt 8-9 in the context of the whole gospel narrative is open to error.

Certain attempts have been made to address this problem, such as the focus on

² Luz, "Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9," 150.

placement analysis and organizational devices like the chiasm,³ but these theories are artificial and the miracles do not easily fall into a chiastic shape. The most serious problem of this approach is that “theological studies which have used chiasm for purposes of exegesis are rare.”⁴ In other words, this approach cannot provide theological interpretation, while it may give some ascetic structures.

Another type of placement study focuses on what is called “triadic analysis,” such the studies of Davies and Allison.⁵ The difficulty with the use of this method is that it remains wooden, and does not seem to allow for theological significance to be derived from it, as is the case with chiastic approaches.

At present there is no unanimous agreement on the approach necessary for understanding the arrangement of Matthew 8-9, and of course then, no agreement on authorial intent with respect to the placement of the miracles in their structure. That is, the overall structure has been addressed, but never in a way to illustrate the particular role played by each miracle in the overall structure Matthew created by his placement of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9.

Before any new suggestion of method can be made, this introduction of the main difficulties with the models used up until the present deserve a more detailed discussion.

³ This will be explained in the section of “New Approaches through Chiasm” in Chapter Two: History of Research.

⁴ Donald R. Miesner, “Chiasm and the Composition and Message of Paul’s Missionary Sermons” (S.T.D. thesis, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, 1974), 7.

⁵ Triadic approaches will be discussed in Chapter Two Research of History.

Thematic Approaches

Günther Bornkamm

After World War II, three main scholars, none of whom were in contact with each other, introduced Redaction Criticism as a new field that evolved from form critical analysis of the Synoptic Gospels: Günther Bornkamm, Hans Conzelmann, and William Marxsen. Bornkamm started the redactional study of Matthew in a short article in 1948, “The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew.”⁶ There he emphasizes and illustrates that Matthew was not only a presenter but also an interpreter of the traditions of the early Christian churches. Matthew should be seen as an interpreter who demonstrated a certain command in his use of his sources, as can be seen when one compares his editing to that of Luke, for example.

As a pioneer of redactional analysis, Bornkamm focuses on the difference between the pericope in Matt 8:23-27 and its synoptic parallels in Mark 4:35-41 and Luke 8:22-25. He illustrates that by placing the story in a different context than that found in Mark and by making his own additions Matthew gives a new meaning to the story.⁷ That is, Matthew positioned this story just after the two sayings of Jesus about discipleship (Matt 8:19-22), and by adding the Jesus saying, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” (8:26), he really reinterprets the story so that it addresses discipleship.⁸ Of course, he

⁶ Günther Bornkamm, “Die Sturmstillung im Matthäusevangelium,” *Wort und Dienst* (1948) 49-54, reprinted in G. Bornkamm, G. Barth, H. J. Held, *Überlieferung und Auslegung im Matthäusevangelium* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1960), 48-53; translated into English, “The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew 8:23-27,” in *Tradition and Interpretation in Matthew* (trans. Percy Scott [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963]), 54-57.

⁷ Bornkamm, “Stilling of the Storm,” 53.

⁸ Ibid., 55.

calls on other observations such as the addition of “disciples” in the introduction of Matt 8:23, as well as the change in the disciples’ cry for help from their criticism of Jesus to their confession of confidence in Jesus (8:25), using “Lord” as a divine designation rather than a human title of respect.⁹

Here Bornkamm identifies the author’s distinctive approach to the miracle story as “a kerygmatic paradigm of the danger and glory of discipleship,” using Dibelius’ concept of a paradigm.¹⁰ Although he does not explain in detail why this pericope should be paradigmatic, he believes that the theological intention of Matthew in this pericope is the emphasis on the theme of discipleship. According to Bornkamm, one can see the typical “choral ending” of a paradigm when Matthew replaces “disciples” with “men” to the question of who Jesus is in Matthew 2:27.”¹¹ It must be noted however, that the word ‘men’ refers to those who followed Jesus after the Sermon on the Mount, and therefore was only natural. Although Bornkamm’s identification of this pericope as a paradigm was not detailed or complete, his conclusion has hugely influenced later interpretations of miracle stories in Matthew 8-9, especially in the case of Heinz J. Held.

Bornkamm’s development of Redaction Criticism as a new discipline was possible because he noticed the problem of Form Criticism which tends “to look upon the single pericope, the single saying and the single deed of Jesus as the primary data of tradition and to regard context and framework of the single pericopes on the other hand

⁹ Ibid., 54-56.

¹⁰ Ibid., 57.

¹¹ Ibid., 56; Dibelius, *From Tradition*, 57f.

as secondary.”¹² This notion enabled him to seek the motives in the evangelist’s composition of the story of the Stilling of the Storm by focusing both on the placements in the gospel, as we have seen, and by his additions and substitutions. Nevertheless, one cannot help but notice that he still appeals to form criticism by categorizing the story as in the style of “paradigmatic narratives.”¹³ This attitude toward Form Criticism was very natural; he was a pupil of Rudolf Bultmann and he “always assumed the results of Form Criticism in his own studies.”¹⁴ Thus, even though he recognizes the limitations of form criticism, he was still dependent on its classifications himself. Even though he brings in the Matthean additions and choices of placement in the gospel, he was dealing only with the single miracle apart from other factors of placement, that is, the arrangement of the miracles set in Matt 8-9. While we should admit Bornkamm’s contribution to the development of Form Criticism into Redaction Criticism, his contribution also put a strong limit to the research of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9 for a long time by putting a form critical boundary on it.

Heinz J. Held

One reason for the continual problems with the incomplete analysis of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9 is paradoxically the huge influence of Held, who sought to bring clarity to the Matthean miracle set with a thematic approach.¹⁵ However, he focused the

¹² Bornkamm, 57.

¹³ Ibid., 56.

¹⁴ Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 25.

¹⁵ Held finds Matthew’s miracle stories similar to the concepts of Dibelius’ paradigm and Bultmann’s apothegm. Here he concludes that Matthew’s miracle stories are given an illustrative meaning. See Held, “Matthew as Interpreter,” 242-245.

investigation of the miracles for the first time completely through the lens of form criticism. Previous studies had been only partial, focusing on each miracle story. Under the influence of his mentor Günther Bornkamm, who interpreted the stilling of the storm (Matthew 8:23-27) as “a kerygmatic paradigm of the danger and glory of discipleship,”¹⁶ Held approached the Matthean miracle stories with respect to the degree to which they were clearly paradigms.¹⁷ As he analyzed how Matthew retold the Markan miracle stories through abbreviation and expansion, he preferred the system of Dibelius, rather than that of Bultmann and his identification of the miracle story, a “form” unfamiliar to the ordinary person of the first century. For Dibelius the stories of Jesus’ miracles were either “paradigms” or “tales.” Held concluded that Matthew’s miracles held the brevity, focus, and special Jewish message that characterized the Dibelius paradigm form.¹⁸

The abbreviations¹⁹ that can be found in many miracle stories of Matthew’s Gospel gave Held the impression that “the first evangelist did not attach much importance to the narratives about Jesus,” because he thought that the abbreviations weakened the miracle stories.²⁰ According to Held, abbreviation was necessary to Matthew in order to concentrate on the essential theme of the miracle stories through removing the secondary characters and backgrounds. Thus, the analysis of the

¹⁶ Bornkamm, “The Stilling of the Story,” 56.

¹⁷ Held, “Matthew as Interpreter,” 168.

¹⁸ Ibid., 241-246. See also p.242 footnote 2 for the characteristics of Dibelius’ paradigm.

¹⁹ Held, “Matthew as Interpreter,” 168-192. Abbreviation is one salient method of retelling the miracle stories in the Gospel of Matthew. This is the starting point of Held’s analysis. After this, Held traces the form with the remaining text, which is important to know the author’s intention. He also uses the methods of expansion and omission, but they do not take a big portion in his analysis.

²⁰ Ibid., 166.

abbreviated texts provides a clue for the author's interpretation of the miracle stories in Matthew.

Held finds four characteristics common in the paradigms in Matthew 8-9:²¹

- a. The recession of the descriptive element and the predominance of formal expressions, particularly at the beginning and the end.
- b. The leaving out of all secondary people and secondary actions.
- c. The increasing meaning of the conversation between the suppliant and Jesus
- d. The role of faith, which is developed in conversation.

All these characteristics prevent us from calling the miracle passages in Matthew "miracle stories" as defined by Bultmann because they are taking the form of conversation rather than focusing on an action. Among these characteristics, the conversation between the suppliant and Jesus, which is found in almost every miracle story, is important to Held in understanding the author's intention. This is especially true of Jesus' final saying, which provides the main theme of the paradigms in Matthew 8-9.

Here Held notes the particular characteristics that identify them as paradigms:²²

- a. The action reaches its climax, which cannot be surpassed, either in a saying or deed of Jesus.
- b. The simple description is confined to the most necessary matters; on the more intimate circumstances, the time of the day, the occasion, other people, and generally on the place practically nothing is reported. With regard to the suppliants we learn nothing except that they wish to come into contact with Jesus. What we do learn, however, and what alone we are supposed to learn is this: how Jesus responds to this contact. In the paradigmatic healing stories the topic of the miraculous is missing: the only important thing is that Jesus healed and how he revealed in a short saying the meaning and object of his action to the person healed and the witness.
- c. At the end there often stands a saying of Jesus which has a general meaning and which, as a rule for faith or life, gives the whole story an immediate reference to the hearers.

²¹ Ibid., 225.

²² Ibid., 244.

While Held admits the difficulty of making a clear conclusion about the form of the miracle stories in Matthew's Gospel, he settles on the form of paradigm and the form of conversation.²³ Based upon this observation Held concludes that each miracle story is "given an illustrative meaning, with different themes."²⁴

Of course, Held did not limit his analysis to each paradigm in the set because he also indicates a systematic nature in Matthew's Gospel. He sees a well-ordered cycle in Matthew 8-9, which follows Matthew 5-7 (the Sermon on the Mount), a meaningful arrangement of Jesus sayings. Depending on the theme Held identifies for each paradigm, he divides Matthew 8-9 into three sections: Prophecy fulfillment of God's Servant/Christology (8:1-17), Discipleship (8:18-9:17) and Faith (9:18-31).²⁵ Held does not mean that these three sections are mutually exclusive but rather that one special theme is prevailing while others are overlapping. He has to admit that there is an overarching theme of Christology.²⁶

This thematic approach influenced Held's interpretation of Matthew's intention in the redacted material. For example, Held explains that since the healing miracles focus on faith, Matthew omitted two Markan miracles from his Gospel, Mark 7:31-37 (the exorcism of the dumb/demoniac) and Mark 8:22-26 (the healing of the blind man of

²³ Ibid., 245.

²⁴ Ibid., 245.

²⁵ Ibid., 245-246, 248-49.

²⁶ Ibid., 248.

Bethsaida).²⁷ However, it is doubtful if this is the main reason for the omission. Rather it would be more persuasive to explain that Matthew removed every Markan data that made Jesus look weak or dependent on magic to suit his Christology.²⁸ In addition, not all miracle stories in Matthew 8-9 describe faith, as shown in the examples of Matt 8:14-15; 8:23-27; 8:28-34; 9:32-34. Four out of nine paradigms are not based upon faith, so that faith cannot be argued as the most fundamental interest of the author.

Another example is found in the doublets. Matthew 9:27-31 (the Healing of the Two Blind Men), is repeated in Matthew 20:29-34. Held thinks that Matthew retold Mark 10:46-52 first in Matthew 20 and then in Matthew 9.²⁹ The reason for this is that the second telling follows the Markan tradition more closely than the first one. His conclusion reflects his claim that the tendency of Matthew's free reproduction becomes clearer in the second stage. If Held's analysis is correct, however, we should ask first of all if Matthew 20:29-34 is a paradigm as much as Matthew 9:27-31 or, in other words, whether 20:29-34 is closer to the "miracle story" of Bultmann or to the "paradigm" of Dibelius. Held defined the Matthean miracle stories as paradigmatic, but Matthew 20:29-34 does not clearly support the claim, as it would an abbreviated miracle story.

Since the evidence shows that Matthew abbreviates the Markan miracle story as he chooses, it appears that he is not aware of these distinctions that Held and other scholars recognize in "paradigm" and "miracle story." Matthew 20:29-34 really does not

²⁷ Ibid., 298.

²⁸ For example, see Robert H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Handbook for a Mixed Church under Persecution* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. E. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 2nd ed., 174. Mark 7:31-37 can be misunderstood as "magic," while Matthew's problem with Mark 8:22-26 is that Jesus had to try two times before the man could see.

²⁹ Ibid., 219-220.

abbreviate the background enough to be classified as a paradigm; instead, it just omitted some unfashionably repeated phrases of the Markan texts and the secondary characters. In addition, the author changed Jesus' saying into an instance of Jesus' touching (Matt 20:34// Mark 10:52), which is done through compassion and no other motive.

All these examples lead us to doubt if it is helpful to apply Dibelius' own created form of "paradigm" and argue against "miracle story" which also was a form that is never attested as conscious to anyone in the first century. Dibelius himself admits the limits of his classification of the paradigm. Since Held took the risk of putting all his eggs in this one basket,³⁰ his work was confined by controls that Dibelius himself admits are not certain. His method of searching for Matthew's intended "themes" in each "paradigm," influenced his followers to enter into the same conversation in the analysis of Matthew 8-9. The controls are so weak, however, that it is not at all surprising that Allison asserts that the thematic approach for studying Matthew 8-9 should be abandoned.³¹

Another point that should be observed is that because Held was focusing on the wisdom of the paradigm he did not give proper attention to the miraculous event in the account. For example, the stilling of the storm is a lesson in discipleship, not the attesting of Jesus' power over nature, and Jairus' daughter is a lesson in faith, not the confession of Jesus' power to bring back the dead. Finally, Held was so focused on the individual themes of each account that he did not note the effect of the structure of the set. Thus, in his interpretation the question of the structure of the set was not in focus;

³⁰ Held just takes the works of Dibelius and Bultmann for granted. Without discussing the form of paradigm, he just focuses on the close relation between paradigm and his analyzed miracle stories. See his article, "Matthew as Interpreter," 242.

³¹ Davies & Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 3-4.

Matthew 8-9 was a collection of paradigms meant to teach discipleship and faith as a response to Christ.³² This interpretation seems to have been dependent on the fact that none of the fourteen pericopes in Matthew 8-9 are miracle stories

Third, Held neglected the context of Matthew 8-9. Even though he admitted the close relationship between Matthew 5-7 (Jesus' words) and Matthew 8-9 (Jesus' deeds),³³ he did not integrate this relationship into his interpretation of Matthew 8-9. For him, both should be seen as Christological expressions. The conceptual gap, however, between "paradigm" (theme) and "deed" in the analysis of Matthew 8-9 has to be noted.

Christology in Matthew 8-9 should be approached from the viewpoint of Jesus' deed as a pair with Jesus' word in Matthew 5-7. However, there is a parallel between "paradigm" and actual "deed." If "paradigm" neglects the flow of a story, "deed" denies any theme in it. If paradigm places the emphasis on themes, deed stresses behaviors. Moreover, two among Held's three themes in Matthew 8-9 are not directly related to Jesus' deeds.

"Discipleship" and "faith" focus on other people's responses, but not Jesus' deeds. This is why a thematic approach is basically wrong in analyzing Matthew 8-9, if we accept the unanimous agreement that Matthew 8-9 is about Jesus' deeds.

Fourth, we should distinguish motif and theme. The subjects in Matthew 5-7 such as fulfillment of the laws, charity, or beatitude are not interpreted as themes. They could be motifs, but they cannot be the main themes of Matthew 5-7. The passage is not emphasizing its contents such as adultery, divorce or oaths; the passage is just describing Jesus' power in word or Jesus' revolutionary teaching, which surprised people. Likewise,

³² Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 248-49.

³³ Ibid., 249-253.

the three themes of Held cannot be centered on the interpretation of Matthew 8-9. The passage is emphasizing the powerful deeds of Jesus, not some themes such as faith or discipleship. Held's method may be valuable in his trying to identify the miracle stories in Matthew as a different genre from the miracle stories of Mark under the influence of Form Criticism, but it is not useful in analyzing Matthew 8-9. His paradigmatic focus cannot account for the prominent place of Jesus' deeds in the miracle accounts.

Fifth, it must be noted that Held limited the redactor's role to the minimum, only helping focus the paradigm. He is right that certain themes do arise in the stories, such as discipleship and faith, but he overlooked the other ways in which Matthew showed his desire to have the stories function in the deliberate way he moved them out of Markan order, used Q, and refashioned them in a new structure. This is real redaction which went unexplored.³⁴ As shown in the case of doublets, Matthew's repetitions do not always take the same format. Some are given other backgrounds and include other characters. Sometimes also Matthew will add sentences that help to bring out the miracle itself Matthew 9:26, 9:30-31, 9:33-34.

This approach, which is only individual and focused on themes of paradigms, would receive a fresh approach with the rise of narrative criticism, but not for some time. His approach would continue to influence other scholars in their exegesis of Matt 8-9.

William G. Thompson

If Held tried to find how Matthew retold the traditional miracle stories of Mark and Q as a whole, Thompson tried to support Held's thematic approach through the

³⁴ Luz evaluates Held as follows: "The success of Held's book may be attributed partly to the fact that interpreting the Matthean miracles as paradigms facilitated their reception by modern Protestant readers." See Luz, "Die Wundergeschichten," 50.

restricted analysis of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9. In other words, while Held tried to find paradigmatic patterns and their themes in the miracle stories of the whole Gospel of Matthew, Thompson tried to prove Held's thematic understanding through the analysis of several compositional techniques that he presupposed Matthew adopted in redacting Matthew 8-9.³⁵ Following Held's three-fold divisions of Matthew 8-9, Thompson tries to show how each division supports Held's themes: 8:1-17 (Christology); 8:18-9:17 (discipleship); 9:18-31 (faith); 9:32-34 (conclusion).³⁶

Thompson's assumption was that in order to understand the over-all composition of Matthew 8-9 we needed another method: "a vertical approach." According to him, Held's approach was built upon "a horizontal approach" based upon Source Criticism, which emphasized the uniqueness of the redacted material in comparison to its sources. But the problem of this horizontal approach was that it did not pay attention to the composition of the collected miracle stories; in other words, it did not provide the total theology of the redactor. To solve this problem, Thompson suggested to "study Matthew in terms of Matthew."³⁷ For this goal, he focuses on Matthew's composition rather than on the synoptic comparison. Thompson believes that through the analysis of the composition we can find the redactor's particular interests and his community's needs.

His approach was influenced by N. Perrin's book, *What is Redaction Criticism?*

³⁵ Some scholars think that Thompson as the forerunner of narrative criticism. But his concern was the technique used in composition rather than the contents of composition.

³⁶ Interestingly Thompson understands Matt 9:32-34 as the conclusion of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9. Here we can read Thompson's understanding of Matthew 8-9 as a narrative unit. However, he could not see the whole picture of Matthew 8-9 by focusing on the themes as Held did.

³⁷ William G. Thompson, "Reflections on the Composition of MT 8:1-9:34," in *CBQ* 33 (1971), 366.

In this book, Perrin sees three aspects of Redaction Criticism: 1) change of the original material, 2) arrangement of the changed material, 3) the movement of the arranged material.³⁸ Thompson focuses on compositions covering all these three aspects with the designation of “Composition Criticism,” contrary to Held’s approach which focuses mainly on “the change of the original material.” According to Thompson, Composition Criticism “is equally concerned with the evangelist’s selection and redaction of existing material, his composition of new material and his arrangement of redacted or freshly created material into new units and patterns.”³⁹

Thompson’s study of Matthew 8-9 starts with the attention to the two summaries of Jesus’ activity (4:23; 9:35). These summaries emphasize Jesus’ three-fold activities: “teaching in the synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.” Interestingly, he thinks that “the miracle-section (Matt 8:1-9:34) belongs to Matthew’s presentation of Jesus as powerful [both] in *word* and *work* (italics mine).”⁴⁰ In other words, he is different from most scholars in that Matthew 8-9 describes Jesus’ powerful deed as a pair with Jesus’ powerful word in Matthew 5-7.⁴¹

In this understanding, perhaps he was thinking of Held’s paradigmatic approach focusing on Jesus’ sayings even though he does not use the word “paradigm” at

³⁸ Norman Perrin, *What is Redaction Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 66.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 366.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 367.

⁴¹ As Held also has the general viewpoint about this, most scholars are unanimous in this analysis. Clearly the thematic approach has already been in Thompson’s mind.

all in his article.⁴² It well might be that because Held's paradigmatic approach focused on Jesus' speech, Thompson thought that the Matthean miracle stories relate with Jesus' words as well as his deed. Yet the emphasis on Jesus' words is apparent. According to Thompson, Jesus' power in word and work is especially well reflected in the first division of Matthew 8-9: 8:1-17. He sees the power of Jesus' word in the repetition of the same keyword, which is one of the several writing skills he presupposed in his article. In the leper's healing story, the word "cleanse" is repeated (8:2, 3a, 3b). In the second story of the cure of the centurion's servant, the centurion believed the power of Jesus' word (8:8, 9) and Jesus' word cured the servant (8:13).

Matthew's interest in the person of Jesus (i.e., Jesus' word and deed) is also reflected in the verbal contact between the set of miracle stories, which Thompson presupposes is another compositional technique. For example, "touching" occurs in 8:3 and 8:15; "Lord" is used in 8:2 and 8:5-6. He thinks that these verbal contacts strengthen the thematic unity of Matthew 8:1-17. Thompson also holds that some styles and vocabulary reveal the redactor's intention "to weave these episodes into a single unified composition;"⁴³ for example, the genitive-absolute construction and the word order (8:1, 5) or a coherent setting of these episodes (8:1, 5, 14, 16).

Thompson also uses the same method of analyzing each pericope through composition techniques such as repetition of same keywords, verbal contacts, similar styles and vocabulary in supporting Held's second theme, discipleship (8:18-9:17) and his third theme, faith (9:18-31). Each section uses its own particular repetitions in order

⁴² Thompson never uses 'paradigm' in his article, "Reflection on Mt 8:1-9:34."

⁴³ Ibid., 370.

to identify its theme and grouping. Matthew 9:32-34 is identified as the conclusion of the miracle section in the “reaction of the crowds and the Pharisees to the cure of a dumb man.”⁴⁴ Thompson does not accept this pericope as a miracle story, but rather he focuses on the reaction of the people. Here we see his dependence on Held, but also that Thompson saw not only a collection of paradigms but also a penetrating narrative in the collection of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9.

Thompson contributed to the study of the Matthean miracle stories by “insisting that one needed to look at the passage as a whole, as a Matthean composition, and not only piecemeal in terms of what Matthew may have done with his sources.”⁴⁵ Focusing on Matthew’s several compositional skills, he supported Held’s three-fold thematic divisions of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9. He tried to strengthen Held’s form critical approach by understanding all miracle stories in Matthew from the paradigmatic viewpoint (i.e., the notion that Matthew changed the original miracle stories of Jesus into the paradigmatic sayings of Jesus to emphasize some specific themes) by his observation of these themes being shown in a continuous flow of narratives. In the end, then, Thompson reinforced Held’s use of form criticism to exegete the meaning of Matthew’s miracle story collection.

Four features characterize his approach. First, Thompson accepted Held’s paradigmatic analysis of the miracle stories in Matthew without criticism. While he admitted the difficulty of applying the theme of “discipleship” to the second part because

⁴⁴ Ibid., 385.

⁴⁵ Thomas H. Tobin, “Legacy of William G. Thompson, S.J.,” in *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in Memory of William G. Thompson, S.J.* ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 3.

of the exorcism of the Gadarene demoniacs (8:28-34) and the cure of the paralytic (9:1-8),⁴⁶ Thompson did not make any effort to correct it.

Second, the boundary of his so-called compositional approach was limited to form criticism. While he paid attention to the flow of the stories, this was not based upon the story itself but on the continuity of the themes, by analyzing the repetition of vocabulary. His attention focused on compositional techniques, but not the flow of the narratives given the particular structure they hold. (Later, he adopted another approach, wherein he interpreted the content of the stories for their meaning⁴⁷ but did not analyze how the three themes connected to the structure of the set.)

Third, Thompson understands Matthew 8-9 as a mixture of Jesus' word and deed, a sign of his dependence on form critics like Bornkamm or Held. Even though he did not use the word "paradigm" our review indicates his seeming presupposition of such a form. Interestingly, although Bornkamm and Held agree that Matthew 8-9 is related to Jesus' deeds, Thompson interprets Matthew 8-9 as a mixture of both Jesus' deed and word. Thompson noticed that the problem of the thematic approaches of Bornkamm and Held is that they could not be harmonized with the theme of Jesus' deeds. He did not delve into this issue but presented common elements that supported the themes. Thus he straddled the knowledge of the miraculous deeds and the emphasis on claiming paradigmatic themes in the stories.

Finally, his understanding of context and framework was a good beginning but not quite enough. For Thompson, the context does not mean a pericope's concrete

⁴⁶ Thompson, "Reflections on Mt 8:1-9:34," 375.

⁴⁷ Thompson, *Matthew's Story: Good News for Uncertain Times* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989).

situation in the development of the story but its cooperation to support the presupposed theme. As a result, he does not pay attention to the story line of Matthew 8-9 itself. He minimized Matthew's role as the redactor in structure and focused on the composition of the individual stories, the coherence of the vocabulary and the repetition of certain teachings or themes.

In sum, it is Thompson who did draw our attention to the "conversation" among the components of the miracle set, but it was limited to compositional techniques such as repetition of same keywords, verbal contacts, similar styles and vocabulary. These techniques are helpful in observing the continuity of some particular key words or themes, but not in observing the flow of the story lines of Matthew 8-9. This limit prevented him from "studying Matthew in terms of Matthew" in its full sense.

Christoph Burger

Christoph Burger follows J. Shniewind's interpretation of Matthew 5-9, in which the Jesus described in Matthew 5-7 is titled "the Messiah of Word" while in Matthew 8-9 he is understood as "the Messiah of Deed."⁴⁸ Burger counts ten miracle stories in Matthew 8-9 and accepts the author's role as an interpreter as well as a collector and keeper of traditions. He does not, however, accept that Matthew 8-9 should be interpreted as a demonstrative collection of miracle stories with an exclusively Christological intention. Instead, Burger understands Matthew 8-9 more importantly as "the foundational legend of Christian church."⁴⁹ This is explained by his view of Matthew 9:1-

⁴⁸ Julius Schniewind, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Göttingen: Vandernhoeck & Ruprecht, 1936), 37, 106.

17 as supporting the theme, not of discipleship, but of the “separation of Jesus and his discipleship from Judaism.”

Burger’s interpretation of Matthew 8-9 from the viewpoint of ecclesiology rather than Christology starts with his six observations:⁵⁰

1) In Matthew 8-9 Burger observes not only ten miracle stories but also several different stories such as that of the “would-be followers of Jesus” (8:18-22), “the call of Levi” (9:9-13), and “the question about fasting” (9:14-17). Matthew does not just follow Markan traditions verbatim, but sometimes uses different materials like Q and sometimes he even changes the order of Markan material.

2) All miracle stories, except the story of the centurion’s servant (8:5-13), come from the Gospel of Mark, but Matthew does not use all of Mark’s miracle stories nor does he arrange them according to the order of Mark. Although it was possible for Matthew to adopt a simple collection of miracle stories in the same order as Mark 4:35-5:43, he chose to assign them a different order. According to Burger, this shows that there must be some particular significance to the miracle stories for Matthew other than as witnesses to the power of Jesus.

3) The insertion of the story of “the sick healed at evening” (8:16-17) marks a turning point. Matthew adopted this summarized note in 8:16 following Mark 1:32-34 after the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 8:14-15). He shortens the Markan summary (8:16) further, however, and he adds the characteristic Matthean phrase: “This

⁴⁹ Christopher Burger, “Jesu Taten nach Matthäus 8 und 9,” in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 70 (1973), 287.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 275-283.

was to fulfill what had been spoken through...,” in this case “the prophet Isaiah” (8:17). Notice that Matthew does not put this summary at the end of the entire miracle set of Matthew 8-9, but after the first three miracles (8:1-15). According to Burger, this suggests that the following stories will have a new theme, one different from that found in Matthew 8:1-17.

4) Attention should be given not only to the arrangement but also to the revision of each miracle story. The author shortened the Markan miracle stories and emphasized the conversations between Jesus and the participants rather than the description of the amazing miracles. This raises questions about the whole character of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9. According to Burger, the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9 serve a new motif; they gain paradigmatic characters and serve the ecclesiological interests of the evangelist all the while. Matthew shows that he is less interested in the amazing healing power so that one must say that his focus is not exclusively Christological.

5) The repetition of Matthew 4:23 and 9:35 joins the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) and the following two chapters to create a united block with two counterparts. Matthew 5-7 not only brings back the memory of Jesus’ teaching but also writes down the basic laws of a Christological community. According to Burger, these basic laws are eminently related to ecclesiology. Therefore, he concludes, Matthew 8-9 should be interpreted not only as a demonstrative collection of Jesus’ miraculous deeds but also as a reflection of Matthew’s ecclesiological teaching.

6) Matthew 4:23 and 9:35 have almost the same wording, “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, *teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of*

the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness” (italics mine). However, this does not mean that these two verses are the *inclusio* of one united chapter. According to Burger, the Sermon on the Mount is related to teaching (especially teaching of Jesus’ laws), because Matthew 5-7 ends with people’s astonishment about Jesus’ teaching: “Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at his *teaching*, for he *taught* them as one having authority, and not as their scribes” (7:28-29; italics mine). Matthew 8-9, then, is connected with the second part of the fundamental account: proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness.

Based on these six observations, Burger discovers a “new collage” which Matthew created.⁵¹ In this mosaic he finds a new message different from that of Mark. In the case of the first three miracle stories (the healing of a leper, the centurion’s servant, and the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law [Matthew 8:1-15]), Burger finds a common factor in that the suppliants have no or limited rights in the Jewish society: the leper, the pagan, and the woman.⁵² Jesus takes care of those outcasts: “he took our infirmities and bore our diseases” (8:17).

In the stories of succession (8:18-22) and the calming the storm (8:23-27), Burger observes the same theme as Bornkamm—discipleship. However, he puzzles over whether the story of the Gadarene demoniacs (8:28-34) which follows has the same theme of discipleship.⁵³ Matthew is not really interested in the two persons, for they are given no

⁵¹ Ibid., 283.

⁵² Ibid., 284.

particular attention; he omits the situation of the two demoniacs (Mark 5:3-6) and even their conversation with Jesus (Mark 5:18-20). Instead, Matthew finishes this pericope with the rejection of Jesus by the inhabitants of the Gadarene country, they ask him to leave their region (8:34). Even in this pericope Burger finds the continuing theme of discipleship, this time observing that the occurrence in the Gadarene country illustrates the “risk of succession,”⁵⁴ while the previous story of the stilling of the storm concerns Jesus’ help for his disciples.⁵⁵ If Jesus himself was rejected by the Gadarene inhabitants in spite of his miracle, his disciples will be even more so exposed to the risk of rejection.

Contrary to Held’s division of Matthew 8-9, Burger discovers a different theme in Matthew 9:1-17. While Held observed the continuing theme of discipleship in Matthew 9:1-17 he was not confident that the same theme could be applied to the pericope of the Gadarene demoniacs;⁵⁶ Burger notices the theme of the “separation of Jesus and his disciples from Israel.”⁵⁷ That is, in the healing of the paralytic (9:1-8), the scribes’ accuse Jesus of blasphemy; in the call of Levi (9:9-13), the Pharisees criticize Jesus for eating with tax collectors and sinners; in the question about fasting (9:14-17), “the disciples of John and the Pharisees” of Mark 2:18 are changed by Matthew into “the disciples of John” (9:14). These three controversy stories address respectively the power to forgive

⁵³ Ibid., 285.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 285.

⁵⁵ Generally this pericope is thought to have no relationship to discipleship. For example, Held thinks that the theme of discipleship is hidden in this pericope (Held, “Matthew as Interpreter,” 248).

⁵⁶ Held, “Matthew as Interpreter,” 248.

⁵⁷ Kingsbury, “Observations on the “Miracle Chapters” of Matthew 8-9,” in *CBQ* 1978 (40), 562.

sins, table association, and freedom from the strictures of Jewish tradition.⁵⁸ According to Burger, this is an illustration of Jesus' comment that new wine is not kept in old wineskins (9:17).

At the conclusion of Matthew 8-9, according to Burger, Matthew again combines three miracles (9:18-34).⁵⁹ The first pericope, the raising of the dead daughter of an official (9:18-26), emphasizes the union of faith and the miraculous. Changing the Markan petitioner from a leader of a synagogue, Jairus, to an unnamed official, Matthew dramatically changes the character of the petition from a request that Jesus come and lay his hands on his dying daughter to restore her (Mark 5:23) to a situation wherein the girl has already died and the father asks Jesus to restore her to life. In the intervening miracle of the woman with the hemorrhage, Matthew removes the cure of the woman done only through secretly touching Jesus (Mark 5:29) and feeling his power stop her flow of blood. Instead, Jesus directly pronounces the words of healing, which have their efficacy not only with that command but, as Jesus says, due to her faith, "Take heart, daughter. Your faith has made you well" (9:22). In the second pericope (9:27-31), which Matthew builds from the story of Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52), Matthew deviates from the Markan script in which Jesus asks Bartimaeus "What do you want me to do for you?" (10:21) and asks the men if they believe he can open their eyes. Again the focus is on the faith of the petitioner. In the third story (9:32-34), Burger observes that people withdraw faith in the negative way because of the Pharisees' negative judgment: "by the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons" (9:34). For Burger, just as for Held, this redaction expresses

⁵⁸ Burger, "Jesu Taten," 286.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 286.

Matthews desire to teach that faith in Jesus creates new life, and brings new sight.⁶⁰

Burger concludes that in Matthew 8-9 the first evangelist arranged the different traditional materials according to thematic viewpoints: Jesus' attention to the outcasts (8:1-17), the following of Jesus (8:18-34), the new circumstances of the Matthean community (9:1-17), and faith (9:18-34).⁶¹ Therefore, according to Burger, the whole theme of Matthew 8-9 should be the "church of Jesus Christ" rather than Christology because this section anticipates the church's nature and function through Jesus' deeds.⁶² Matthew does not simply present a collection of miracle stories, but more importantly he outlines the miracles that will occur in the Christian Church through Jesus' miracles.

We can identify Burger's contributions to Matthew 8-9 in two points. First, he developed Held's threefold division of Matthew 8-9 into a fourfold division. Held himself was not so confident about his three divisions, in any case, especially when he discussed the pericope of the Gadarene Demoniacs (8:28-34) and the Healing of the paralytic (9:1-8).⁶³ However, Burger categorized the story of the Gadarene demoniacs under the theme of discipleship, as we have seen, by focusing on the Gadarene inhabitants' rejection of Jesus as a portent of the risk in discipleship and the spread of the gospel. In the three pericopae of the healing of the paralytic (9:1-8), the call of Levi (9:9-13), and the question about fasting (9:14-17), Burger discovered a new theme and a painful one. By noting the scribes' criticism of Jesus' sin forgiveness the gospel

⁶⁰ Ibid., 287.

⁶¹ Ibid., 287.

⁶² Ibid., 287.

⁶³ Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 248.

addresses the separation of Jesus and his disciples from Israel.

Another contribution of Burger is that he tried to put the whole set of stories under one unified theme: the church of Jesus Christ. Previously, the main theme of Matthew 8-9 as a counterpart of Matthew 5-7 was not so harmonious with thematic interpretations, i.e. Jesus' deeds vs. faith, but Burger connected Matthew 5-7 and 8-9 as related to the issue of the church. The Sermon on the Mount is related to the teaching of Jesus' laws and the collection of Jesus' miracle stories with the foundational legend of Christian church.⁶⁴ According to Burger, Matthew does not simply collect Jesus' miracle stories, he links the miracles of the Christian church with Jesus in advance. In addition, in Chapter 10 Jesus gives the authority of teaching and healing to his twelve disciples.

His conclusions cannot fully answer the question of Matthew's organization, however, because his focus is dependent only on themes. In this he has the same difficulty as Held in that he explored the paradigms presented by Matthew. What his analysis overlooks is the possibility that Matthew has created something of a "story-line." Even in his efforts to uncover paradigms he stays on the outside of the account looking for its significance and does not enter inside the particular encounter between Jesus and the petitioners, noting the character of the conversation which has been created for the characters there, which is how a paradigm is uncovered, or displayed.⁶⁵ He discovered the theme of the risk of succession in the story of Gadarene demoniacs (8:28-34) by focusing on the Gadarene people's rejection of Jesus, which is the "after story."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid., 287.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 284.

However, it is doubtful if this story's main theme should be the rejection of Jesus' and therefore the risk of discipleship. The Gadarenes were not Jews and the disciples were not ordered to go outside the house of Israel. In the end, Burger has tried to develop thematic approaches to underline paradigms, but using a non-paradigmatic method.

Another problem is found in his theory that Matthew tried to describe the church of Jesus Christ in advance using Matthew 8-9 as well as Matthew 5-7. Burger insists that Matthew 5-7 is Jesus' laws for Christians and Matthew 8-9 is the foundation legend of Christian church.⁶⁷ However, as Kingsbury points out, if Matthew 8-9 is understood as the foundation legend of Christian church, this passage is not so well harmonized with such foundation stories of the church as Peter's confession (16:13-20) and the Great Commission (28:16-20).⁶⁸ More directly, this understanding does not link Matthew 8-9 and the following chapter very well. In Matthew, Jesus chooses his twelve disciples and sends them to villages with healing power (10:1). It is premature to claim the Church's performance of miracles "in advance" even before Jesus gives his twelve disciples the authority to heal. At this stage Christology seems the best description of the theme of Matthew 8-9 as well as of Matthew 5-7.

Third, we should test if his new theme for Matthew 9:1-17, that is the "separation of Jesus and his disciples from Israel," is persuasive.⁶⁹ While the story of calling of Levi (9:9-13) and the story of questioning about fasting (9:14-17) show the division between

⁶⁶ Ibid., 285.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 281, 287.

⁶⁸ Kingsbury, "Miracle Chapters," 562.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 285.

Jesus and Pharisees and the disciples of John, it is doubtful that the story of healing the paralytic (9:1-8) and the separation between Jesus and the scribes can also become the paradigmatic theme. The theme of this pericope should be recognized as that of Jesus' authority to forgive sin, not on the scribes' criticism of Jesus. The story also ends with the crowds' praise of God. It is also too hasty to mention the separation of scribes, Pharisees and the disciples of John against Jesus, even before Jesus criticizes them in Matthew 11-12. We can find some underlying factors of future separation in Matthew 9:1-17, but they are furtive and do not predominate. A better expression would be that they signal the beginning of conflict. Burger seems to impose too many of his conclusions onto material that does not support them.

Fourth, we should ask if the pericope of healing a demoniac who was mute carries the same theme of faith that we find in the story of the faith of the official's daughter, the hemorrhaging woman (9:18-26) and the two blind men (9:27-31).⁷⁰ In the pericope of the deaf mute, "faith" or any similar word does not occur, even from the concerned friends who bring him to Jesus. Burger says that people withdrew their faith because of the Pharisees' accusation that Jesus' exorcisms were collusions with Satan.⁷¹ However, faith is not an issue that is raised by the evangelist in this account, but only the condemnation of those who offend the Spirit. With attention to the response of crowds, they are amazed at Jesus' healing of the mute, but the Pharisees and teachers of the crowds criticized Jesus' power as coming from the ruler of the demons. Thus, there are two different opinions about the source of Jesus' healing: the crowds' have a positive one and the

⁷⁰ Ibid., 286-87.

⁷¹ Ibid., 287.

Pharisees' a negative one. Jesus' comment that the crowds are as "sheep without a shepherd" (9:36) points to the lack of spiritual guidance and vision from the leaders, while the "the plentiful harvest (9:37)" indicates the readiness of the people to receive the truth about God. So we see that loss of faith is just not raised in the pericope of healing of the mute.

In sum, Burger's fundamental limit lies in his thematic approach. All his interpretations are focused on finding new themes or supporting Held's themes from the paradigmatic viewpoint. He used non-paradigmatic methods to support and develop the paradigmatic approaches to Matthew 8-9. As a result, while he was successful in making Held's theory look better, he fell short of finding the intention of Matthew 8-9.

Jack D. Kingsbury

Kingsbury analyzes Matthew 8-9 from three vantage points: 1) arrangement, 2) Christology, and 3) context. First, when he probes the arrangement of Matthew 8-9, he leans to the thematic approaches of Held or Burger rather than Erich Klostermann's "ten" miracle stories,⁷² Eduard Schweizer's collections of sayings and acts of Jesus,⁷³ and Gerd Theissen's geographical schema.⁷⁴ Kingsbury, however, shows that he cannot completely accept Held's and Burger's interpretations of Matthew 8-9. With respect to Held's three-fold division, he thinks that the long second section (8:18-9:17) should be divided into two parts as Burger did: "a travel section (8:18-34) and a section featuring debates" (9:1-

⁷² Erich Klostermann, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1927), 72.

⁷³ E. Schweizer, "Eine hebraisierende Sonderquelle des Lukas," in *TZ* 6 (1950), 175-183.

⁷⁴ G. Theissen, *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten* (Mohn: Gutersloher Verlagshause, 1974), 210.

17).⁷⁵ Kingsbury accepts Burger's explanation of Matthew 8-9 and his fourfold division of Matthew 8-9, but he rejects the identification of the whole section of Matthew 8-9 as serving the one theme of the "church of Jesus Christ."⁷⁶ Instead, Kingsbury holds that the major theme at work in Matt 8-9 is Jesus as Son of God.

Kingsbury's main focus on Christology rather than on ecclesiology is exactly contrary to the view of Burger, and he rejects Klostermann's portrayal of Jesus as the "new Moses"⁷⁷ performing ten miracles or "Servant of God"⁷⁸ to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4. Kingsbury insists that as the Son of God Jesus teaches with authority in the Sermon on the Mount and performs healing power in Matthew 8-9 because he was empowered with the Holy Spirit (3:16).⁷⁹ Jesus' divine sonship can be revealed only by God (11:27; 16:16-17); however, Jesus is called "Lord" (8:2, 6, 8, 21, 25; 9:28), and refers to himself as "Son of Man" (8:20; 9:6), according to the tradition. Therefore, according to Kingsbury, Jesus Messiah in Matthew 8-9 "stands out preeminently, not as the new Moses or the Servant, but as the Son of God."⁸⁰

In the context of the miracle set, Matthew 8-9, Kingsbury emphasizes two aspects, the wider and narrower contexts. First, he analyzes the text from the viewpoint of a wider context: the three major summary passages of 4:23, 9:35 and 11:1. Here

⁷⁵ Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Observations on the Miracle Chapters," 562.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 562.

⁷⁷ Klostermann, *Matthausevangelium*, 72.

⁷⁸ G. Bornkamm, "Enderwartung und Kirche im Matthausevangelium," 34.

⁷⁹ Kingsbury, "Observations on the Miracle Chapters," 565.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 566.

Kingsbury finds Jesus' ministry of teaching, preaching, and healing widespread beyond 4:23 and 9:35 into Chapters 11-12. To him, Matthew 11:1-6 plays the role of "a bridge between two sections (9:35-10:42 and 11:1-12:50)."⁸¹ Second, the narrower context of 4:23 and 9:35 as an inclusion delineates Chapters 5-7 as the teaching of Jesus and Matthew 8-9 as the healings of Jesus. According to Kingsbury, these two points are the basic contexts within which Matthew 8-9 should be understood.

Based upon these three observations, Kingsbury thinks that Matthew 8-9 is not only a part of the Matthean narrative but also "a form of theological address directly to the members of his community."⁸² He finds the reason for this understanding of theological address in the structure of each miracle story where the personal encounter between Jesus and the suppliant(s) are emphasized. Jesus is described as a figure of divine authority, and the suppliants are persons of faith.⁸³ According to Kingsbury, and using the focus of paradigmatic study, he analyzes the centrality of the personal encounter and the dialogue between Jesus and the suppliants, (something Burger does not do, as we observed) and explains this as the reason why we are allowed to understand Matthew 8-9 "paradigmatically."⁸⁴ Here he is drawing on Martin Dibelius' concept of paradigm just as Bornkamm, Held, Thompson, and Burger do. His view of Jesus' paradigm as Divine Son is supported because it brings the Kingdom of Heaven into a

⁸¹Kingsbury, "Observations on the Miracle Chapters," 566.

⁸² Ibid., 568.

⁸³ Ibid., 570.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 571.

present reality both from the eschatological and contemporary viewpoints.⁸⁵ While Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah (Matt 8:17) by releasing both persons and the forces of nature from the sphere of Satan's rule, the miracle stories of Matthew 8-9 also invite the community to approach the exalted Son of God. Jesus will hear them and mercifully employ his divine power to sustain them in time of distress and affliction as he did in Matthew 8-9. Here we can observe Kingsbury's effort to harmonize Christology and Ecclesiology under the theme of the "Son of God," but it is clear that his main focus is on Christology.

Kingsbury's main contribution to the study of Matthew 8-9 is that he tries to build on the paradigmatic approaches of Matthew 8-9 under the unified theme of Christology: Son of God. Of course, he does not abandon Burger's understanding of "church of Jesus Christ," but he also does not build his interpretation upon Burger's ecclesiological understanding either. Instead, he interprets Jesus' significance from two eschatological viewpoints: the consummated and at the same time non-consummated Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus has fulfilled OT prophecy and at the same time he is inviting the Christian community to the faith of Jesus. Of course, the key concept linking these "already – not yet" opposite understandings is "Son of God."

There are three main difficulties with Kingsbury's interpretation. First, concerning the arrangement of the miracle stories Kingsbury accepts thematic approaches as the most plausible interpretation but without any real assessment. Accepting Dibelius' concept of paradigm, as Bornkamm, Held, and Burger did, he concludes that on the basis of the centrality of encounter and conversation between Jesus and the suppliants, the text

⁸⁵ Ibid., 571-72.

calls out to be interpreted only paradigmatically.⁸⁶ The reason Matthew reduced the Markan texts dramatically in Matthew 8-9 requires more controls to test if there is another logic at work. Why did Matthew choose to abbreviate Markan texts with the agency of certain petitioners, their encounters, and conversations rather than descriptive methods? Why did he collect these miracles in this particular configuration? What does the arrangement mean or effect? In this sense, Kingsbury becomes another victim of the huge trend of paradigmatic interpretations of Matthew 8-9 which carry such limitations.

Second, although Kingsbury emphasizes Jesus' identity as Son of God as a special theme of Matthew, we must recognize that Matthew does not clearly designate Jesus as the Son of God until the disciples adore him in Matt 14:22-33. Is the title Son of God really the reason for the particular genealogy presented for Jesus in Matthew 1:1-4:16,⁸⁷ or of the infancy narrative (1:21, 23, 25; 2:15; 3:17)? The manner in which Jesus can be said to be "Son of David, Son of Abraham", a true fulfillment of the scriptures is more the influence there. It is not that the title Son of God is of no import, the point is that Matthew has not taken pains to introduce material again and again in which Jesus is recognized as Son of God as the main point of the story .

In 4:17-10:42, the title Son of God or its equivalent does not occur at all except at 8:29, where Matthew is dependent on the Markan tradition. Even in the Walking on the Water, where the disciples will worship Jesus as Son of God, a correction to the Markan

⁸⁶ Ibid., 570-571.

⁸⁷ Kingsbury divides the Gospel of Matthew into three sections according to a topical analysis (4:16; 16:20): 1:1-4:16 (The Person of Jesus Messiah); 4:17-16:20 (The Proclamation of Jesus Messiah); 16:21-28:20 (The Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Messiah). See his book, *Matthew: Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1975), 9.

tradition with its confused disciples, the major changes in that account are to be seen in Peter's being able to join Jesus on the sea, his sinking when he loses faith, and then his rescue by Jesus when he calls out to him (Matt 14:22-33). Kingsbury argues that the Sonship of God becomes most complete at the conclusion of the gospel with the reference to the Messiah sitting at the right hand (Matt 22:41-44), but again, the evangelist is reporting Markan tradition. Moreover, Kingsbury is reading the gospel backwards applying the final conclusion of the book to the beginning and to the middle, where the evangelist did not make these points clearly in his stories or dynamic. Other dynamics seem to be his concern. In fact, Kingsbury criticizes Burger's Church theme on precisely the same grounds of reading an ending back into the pericope of the whole gospel, where it was not completely apparent.⁸⁸ It would seem that Kingsbury has read a Markan theme into the Matthean use and redaction of it.

Third, regarding context, Matthew 5-7 also should be interpreted under the main theme of "Son of God" for balance if Matthew 8-9 is to be interpreted under the overarching theme of Son of God. Kingsbury says that 5:1-2 and 7:28-29 demonstrate Jesus' authoritative instructions as the Son of God.⁸⁹ However, there is no direct mention of the Son of God in these verses. In addition, Matthew 5-7 is focused on Jesus' surprising teachings themselves rather than on Jesus as the Son of God; we cannot find any clear declaration of Jesus as the Son of God in Matthew 5-7. Given the context of Chapters 11-12 it is questionable whether the section should be understood as Jesus' teaching, preaching, and healing. In Matthew 11-12 we can observe Jesus' criticism

⁸⁸ Kingsbury, "Observations on the Miracle Chapters," 562.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 60.

against John the Baptist, the cities of Chorazin and Capernaum, and the Pharisees. It is not clear how the concept of “bridge” can be applicable; Kingsbury does not explain how this bridge serves in connecting the two sections. He even disconnects 11:2-6 from the following part (11:7-19) as a part of the bridge even though it is unnatural to disconnect them because both passages are related to John the Baptist. In addition, if Matthew 8-9 describes Jesus’ ministry of healing according to the inclusio of 4:23 and 9:35, it is not logical to link the healing ministry with the four themes of Jesus’ fulfillment of OT prophecy, discipleship, separation of Jesus from Israel, and faith. Kingsbury also does not clearly explain the role of Chapter 10 in the wider context of Matthew 5-12. After all, the narrow and wider contexts do not influence his thematic interpretations of Matthew 8-9 so much as he intended in the beginning.

In sum, Kingsbury’s adoption of thematic approaches prevented him from interpreting Matthew 8-9 as a narrative. He tried to apply the catchphrase “Son of God” to Matthew 5-12 too quickly as the overarching theme of teaching, preaching and healing. As a result, he could not read the text according to the flow of the story but as a theological address to the Matthean community. In his later book, *Matthew as Story*, Kingsbury approached the Gospel of Matthew as a narrative.⁹⁰ Although following a literary analysis, this book fails to demonstrate how Matthew 8-9 contributes to the establishment of the main theme of Son of God from the viewpoint of narrative approaches. Clearly his application of the literary theories to the interpretation of Matthew 8-9 is less than persuasive.

⁹⁰ Jack D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as A Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

Conclusion of Thematic Approaches

The thematic approaches are still influencing the interpretations of Matthew 8-9;⁹¹ however, now it is time to abandon these approaches in the study of Matthew 8-9 as Davis and Allison admit.⁹² This form-oriented method removes narrative characters from the passages, and interprets Matthew 8-9 as a series of themes for the church of Jesus Christ. In addition, they are based upon a form critical theory of “paradigm” the existence of which in ancient literary practice has not been proved. This method does not reflect the author’s intention persuasively as they purported at the beginning stage of redaction criticism. Just comparing two related texts is not enough to know the author’s intention; the flow of the storyline is more important in catching the author’s intention because Matthew 8-9 should be interpreted from the viewpoint of the whole Gospel. In this sense, thematic approaches have studied Matthew 8-9 in microscopic scales and are lacking of macroscopic scales. Therefore, it is very natural that we observe the flood of narrative approaches following thematic approaches.

Narrative Approaches

Narrative studies focus on the meaning found in the narrative structure rather than in an isolated fragment as is done with thematic approaches. Form criticism and redaction criticism treat the text in individual isolated units,⁹³ but this cannot fully show the intent of the author for the whole gospel. It has been natural, therefore, to understand the

⁹¹ Many recently published commentaries still partially or holistically interpret Matthew 8-9 from the viewpoint of thematic approaches, whether consciously or not.

⁹² Davis & Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 3.

⁹³ For the limitation of Redaction Criticism, see Warren Carter’s book, *Matthew: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers Inc., 1996), 275-76.

appeal that Narrative criticism has held.⁹⁴ This new approach has influenced the study of the Gospel of Matthew as well. In fact, it is not an exaggeration to say that almost every commentary after 1970 has been influenced by narrative criticism, whether directly or indirectly.

The difficulty of this approach, nonetheless, is that there is no unanimous agreement about the very structure of the Gospel of Matthew in the first place. Bauer himself admits that there is “no consensus regarding the literary structure of the Gospel of Matthew.”⁹⁵ Therefore, many scholars are pessimistic about locating any structure at all due to the widespread failure of scholars in finding any real structure in the Gospel of Matthew. In fact, Luz describes the present state of scholarly proposals for structure in the Matthean gospel, a “chaotic picture.”⁹⁶ Not surprisingly D. Senior has concluded, “It is unlikely that the entire structure of the gospel can be ordered according to any single formal pattern.”⁹⁷ Gundry warns, “We should avoid imposing an outline on Matthew,”⁹⁸ but it is sure that if one author wrote the gospel, there must be one unified plan, even if it is hard to find.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Of course, since the nature of Narrative Criticism holds the danger of neglecting historical elements in the text it should be combined with Form Criticism to allow for any recognition of historical-critical discussions.

⁹⁵ David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 11.

⁹⁶ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 35.

⁹⁷ D. Senior, *What Are They Saying about Matthew?* (New York: Paulist, 1983), 31.

⁹⁸ R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on His Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 10.

⁹⁹ The recognition that the Gospel of Matthew is a unified narrative is essential to its literary-critical study. See Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986). Also

Given this situation, it is highly doubtful that one can assert any analysis of Matthew 8-9 with respect to its service in the larger structure of the gospel. Yet, how can one locate authorial intent with respect to the interpretation of Matthew 8-9 without a clear gospel structure?

Meanwhile, it is not easy to categorize the various narrative approaches¹⁰⁰ because in many cases there are no clear explanations for the structure that is being presented as intended by Matthew; there is no fixed methodology. Besides this most basic issue, the fact is that most scholarly studies of Matthew 8-9 address the miracles as a subcategory of the whole structure, which, as has already been noted by Matthean scholars, is itself in question, while the actual relationship of the miracles to each other in the section has been overlooked. We have already seen the several efforts to comment on the various themes that the miracles serve according to each scholar's perception of Matthew's intent. Narrative approaches however have rarely addressed the relationship among the miracle stories of Matthew 8-9. The main contributions are addressed in this next section.

Geographical-Chronological Approaches

In the history of biblical criticism this approach has the longest roots. Before form

Norman R. Petersen, *Literary criticism for New Testament Critics* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), 20-23; David Rhoads, "Narrative criticism and the Gospel of Mark," *JAAR* 50 (1982), 411-34; Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978); David Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

¹⁰⁰ For the categorization of Narrative Approaches, see Kingsbury, *Structure*, 1-7; Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel*, 21-55; D. Senior, *What Are They Saying About Matthew?* (New York: Paulist, 1983), 25-37.

criticism or Bacon's model of narrative-discourse alteration appeared in 1920-30s,¹⁰¹

these approaches had dominated the study of Matthew's gospel structure.¹⁰² The

ascendancy of form criticism resulted in the waning of the geographical-chronological

approach,¹⁰³ but with the emergence of narrative criticism, this approach was revived.¹⁰⁴

The basic criterion rests on Markan tradition where Jesus moves from Galilee to

Jerusalem. This "bipolar structure" as narrative analysts would entitle it is analyzed by E.

D. Burton with relation to Matthew's structure:¹⁰⁵

- I. The birth and infancy of Jesus (Chapters 1-2)
- II. Preparation for the Public work of Jesus (3:1-4:11)
- III. The Ministry in Galilee (4:12-18:35)
- IV. Journey through Perea to Jerusalem (Chapters 19-20)
- V. The Closing Ministry in Jerusalem (Chapters 21-27)
- VI. The Appearance of Jesus after the Resurrection (Chapter 28)

Although it must be noted that scholars supportive of this approach are not unanimous in

¹⁰¹ B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930).

¹⁰² Among them are B. Weiss (1888), Jülicher (1894), Burton (1898), E. Anderson (1909), W. C. Allen (1912), McNeile (1915), Moffat (1918), Zahn (1909), Box (1922), Robinson (1928), Allen and Grensted (1929). For details, see David R. Bauer's book, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1988), 22-26.

¹⁰³ Some of them are A. Durand, *Evangile selon Saint Matthieu: Traduction et Commentaire* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1948); Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Evangile selon Saint Matthieu* (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1948); M. Meinertz, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1950), A. W. Argyle, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), E. F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

¹⁰⁴ Among them are H. C. Kee, "The Gospel according to Matthew," in *The Interpreter's One-volume Commentary on the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971); E. Klostermann, *Das Matthäus-Evangelium* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1971); W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew: Introduction Translation, and Notes* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1971); A. M. Hunter, *Introducing the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972); W. R. Farmer, *Jesus and the Gospel: Tradition, Scripture, and Canon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); G. Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition*, trans. Francis McDonough (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); E. Schweizer, *The Good News according to Matthew*, trans. D. E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975); H. Conzelmann and A. Lindemann, *Arbeitsbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1975); D. Senior, *Invitation to Matthew: A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew with Complete Text from the Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1977).

¹⁰⁵ Earnest D. Burton, "The Purpose and Plan of the Gospel of Matthew," in *BW* 11 (1898), 97-99.

agreeing to Burton's structure; yet, however different they may be in understanding the structure of Matthew, their common interest lies in the focus on the geographical movement from Galilee to Jerusalem.¹⁰⁶ The real problem with this approach is that its limited parameters do not provide enough scope to access the fullness of Matthean theology.¹⁰⁷ It is well known that Matthew did not simply copy the Markan text; he demonstrates great freedom in fashioning his gospel from his sources, even changing Mark's order especially in Matthew 3-12. Moreover, Matthew has Jesus' infancy stories (Matthew 1-2) as well as the Resurrection appearance stories (Matthew 28). The content of these sources changes the scope of the geographical and chronological elements of the gospel. So even here the method fails. It goes without saying that it is of no help in discussing the interrelationship of the miracle accounts assembled by Matthew in Matthew 8-9. For example, the advocates of this approach agree that Matthew 8-9 is a collection of miracles that Jesus performed in Galilee following the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), but the geographical elements are of no help in unveiling Matthew's reasons for this particular construction.¹⁰⁸

Matthew has also added sayings to the collection of miracles (Matt 8:18-22; 9:9-17). Matthew 8:18-22 is drawn from Q, while Matthew 9:9-17 draws on Mark 2:13-22, two pericope which occur at the very beginning of Jesus' ministry in Mark's gospel. That fact is of no importance to a geographical/chronological interpretation, but for the

¹⁰⁶ For the variations of this structure, see Bauer, 23.

¹⁰⁷ For the problems of this approach, see Bauer, 25-26; Kingsbury, 1-2; Davies & Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 2.

¹⁰⁸ In many cases, those scholars belong to this approach just list all miracle stories without categorizing them in their commentaries. They do not explain the relationship between the miracle stories. For example, among them are Burton, Anderson, Robinson, Schweizer, Albright and Mann.

evangelist to save the pericopae for this section demands an interpretation that the geographical/chronological approach cannot accommodate.

Willoughby C. Allen, a supporter of this method, tries to find the reason for the combination in an association between the saying of the doctor coming to sick people found as the climax saying in Matt 9:10-13//Mk 2:15-17, and the Q saying about the sufferings of the Son of Man as he states, “But it is not easy to see why Mt. should have placed the section [8:19-22] here in his series of miracles. Possibly the thought of the sickness bearer suggested to him the companion picture of the homeless Son of Man.”¹⁰⁹ As for the Call of Levi in Matt 9:9//Mk 2:14, Allen even does not try to explain why the author put this story here among the miracle stories.

T. H. Robinson is not much different from Allen when he says, “Matthew has included one or two events which are connected with miracles in his source, though they are not in themselves miraculous. He probably felt that they ought not to be omitted, and so they retain their original position, though they do not directly add to the development of the main thesis of the section.”¹¹⁰ He ascribes the inclusion of the two non-miracle pericopae as following of the original text. “The evangelist interrupts the series of miracles with narratives of two events, the feast of the publican-disciple and the challenge on fasting. The reason seems to be simply that he wishes to include them in his work, and that in his source (Mark 2:13-17, 18-22) they followed immediately on the

¹⁰⁹ Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew*. ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), 81.

¹¹⁰ T. H. Robinson, *The Gospel of Matthew*. MNTC (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), 69.

cure of the paralytic.”¹¹¹ Robinson’s appeal to “tradition” does not take into account the clearly creative approach that Matthew demonstrates in his use of his sources throughout his gospel.

Albright and Mann take another tack and explain the organization of Matthew 8-9 as a mnemonic technique: “Three stories of healings are linked with three stories of miracles of power by an interpolated story of two inquirers. The whole cycle – three healings, two inquirers, three miracles of power – would make for easier memorizing of oral tradition.”¹¹² The evidence that persuades both scholars here is the format of three that occurs frequently in the gospel.¹¹³ There is no denying that groups of three are in evidence but the question is, why? Eduard Schweizer, who notes the pattern of three, admits the difficulty of explaining Matthew 8-9¹¹⁴ and in the end poses that Matthew was reporting the traditional organization of the material in his community.¹¹⁵ The problem is that, as we have noted above, Matthew shows himself to be unbound by traditions when it comes to the Markan gospel so that conclusions that turn to “tradition” as the answer sound rather hollow. Meanwhile, to A. W. Argyle, Matthew 8:18-22 is acknowledged as awkwardly located in the chronological order; Matthew neglects that it was evening as in

¹¹¹ Ibid., 79.

¹¹² Albright & Mann (1964), *Matthew: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1971), 97.

¹¹³ “The number three is most frequent in Matthew, and always appears in blocks of material in which the proximity of the three integers is easy to recall.” Ibid., LVII.

¹¹⁴ Schweizer, *The Good News according to Matthew* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 71.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 71-73.

Mark 1:32.¹¹⁶

D. Senior, emphasizing the importance of structure as giving “insight into the intended message and purpose of the gospel,”¹¹⁷ recommends reading the gospel vertically from the beginning to the end. According to Senior, the structure of Matthew 8-9 expresses Jesus as “Healer:” 1) Jesus the healing servant (8:1-17), 2) Across the Sea (8:18-9:1), 3) Return to Capernaum (9:1-34). He links 8:18-9:1 as precursors of Chapter 10 (the mission of the community). This section starts with two encounters of the would-be disciples: the sea story (8:23-27) also reflects this section’s discipleship theme, and the liberation of the two Gadarenes (8:28-34) pre-figures the Gentile mission. Therefore, according to Senior, the stories in this section are “harbingers of the community’s challenging mission yet to come.”¹¹⁸

About the story of Matthew’s calling (Matt 9:9-13), Senior explains Jesus’ healing ministry as including spiritual transformation as well as physical transformation.¹¹⁹ The tax collectors and sinners are not isolated any more through Jesus’ spiritual healing. The encounter between John’s and Jesus’ disciples (9:14-17), according to Senior, shows Jesus’ messianic authority. The two metaphors of bridegroom and wine(-skins) ask God’s people’s appropriate response to Jesus’ messiahship.¹²⁰

There is a creativity in Senior’s interpretation that results in a rich series of

¹¹⁶ A. W. Argyle, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 69.

¹¹⁷ Donald Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 24.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 113.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 114.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 115.

meditations which can connect with the rest of the gospel. The difficulty is that although he stresses the significance of geographical changes in Matthew, he is unable to set up controls to show how his interpretations are related to the geographical changes he himself endorses as a method for elucidating Matthean intent. It is also difficult to see how his theory that Matthew wishes to address the discipleship as the precursor to the Gentile mission is addressed by his title for Matthew 8:18-9:1, “Across the sea.” In fact, in Matthew 10:5 Jesus orders his disciples “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of Israel.” The Gentile outreach will only be announced at the very end of the gospel (Matt 28:18-20). How, then, has Matthew prepared his audience in a clear way for the gentile mission in 8:18-9:1?

Senior also separates off Matthew 9:1-34 with the title “Return to Capernaum,” but only on the grounds of a change of place. Since Matthew 9:1-17 is dependent on Mark, Jesus is located in Capernaum “at home” (Mk 2:1//Matt 9:1). The stories that follow in Matthew 9:18-34 give one to understand that Jesus is in the same area even though Matthew 9:18-26 parallels Mark 5:21-43 which simply situates Jesus on the Jewish side of the lake after the exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac. Matthew 9:27 says Jesus “went on from there” to report the double blind-man healing in Matthew 9:27-31 (a combination of blind men stories that recognizes the healing of the Blind Man from Bethsaida [Mk 8:22-26] which Matthew does not relate, and the healing of Bartimaeus [Mk 10 45-52] which is situated in Mark at the exit from the city of Jericho]. The fact that Matthew repositions these stories without much comment on the actual place simply shows that the location did not matter, or so it seems.

In sum, geographical and chronological approaches apply a control that Matthew does not show himself to observe. Scholars who endorse this method must appeal to Tradition when the placement of material does not follow their suggested schemas. Yet, as we have noted, Matthew distinguishes himself by the creativity of his placement of sources and does not seem bound by the order of pericopae. Indeed, it is one of the features that explain Q scholars' examination of Lukan order to establish the order of Q, rather than hope to reconstruct its order from Matthew.¹²¹ The geographical and chronological approaches, then, are not able to assess the reasons for Matthew's creative placement of the material in Matthew 8-9.

Discourse-Narrative Approaches

The appearance of Benjamin W. Bacon's influential book, *Studies in Matthew*, in 1930 hugely influenced the following studies of Matthew's structure.¹²² If the geographical and chronological approach emphasized the continuity of the Markan bipolar structure in the Gospel of Matthew, Bacon concentrated on the repeated pattern of narratives and discourses. In understanding these repeated narratives and discourses, Bacon put heavy weight on Matthew's expansion of the Markan teaching material; he thinks that "the governing principle of [Matthew]'s revised version of the Reminiscences of Peter [the Gospel of Mark] was to furnish a full and orderly compend of the Lord's commandments."¹²³ Bacon explains that this is why Matthew abbreviates Markan

¹²¹ See the full discussion in John S. Kloppenborg, *Excavating Q: The History and Setting of the Sayings Gospel*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 87-111.

¹²² B. W. Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930).

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 80.

narratives and greatly creates as well as expands discourses in Mark.¹²⁴ According to Bacon, in arranging these redacted discourses Matthew could not think of “any better arrangement of the Lord’s commandments than the Torah,” since he viewed Jesus as a converted rabbi and Christian legalist.¹²⁵ Just as the Torah consists of five books, he insists, the Lord’s commandments in Matthew have also been arranged into five books, each with an introductory narrative. This results in the five alternations of narrative followed by discourse. This conclusion seems to be supported by the formula found at the end of each discourse: “And it happened when Jesus finished...” (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Based on these observations, Bacon divides the Gospel of Matthew as follows:¹²⁶

- I. The Preamble (Chapters 1-2)
- II. Book First. Discipleship
 - Division A. Introductory Narrative (Chapters 3-4)
 - Division B. The Discourse (Chapters 5-7)
- III. Book Second. Apostleship
 - Division A. Introductory Narrative (8:1-9:35)
 - Division B. The Discourse (9:36-10:42)
- IV. Book Third. The Hiding of the Revelation
 - Division A. Israel is Stumbled (Chapters 11-12)
 - Division B. Teaching in Parables (13:1-53)
- V. Book Fourth. Church Administration
 - Division A. Jesus and the Brotherhood (Chapters 14-17)
 - Division B. The Discourse (17:22-18:35)
- VI. Book Fifth. The Judgment
 - Division A. Jesus in Judea (Chapters 19-22)
 - Division B. Discourse on Judgment to Come (Chapters 23-25)
- VII. Epilogue (Chapters 26-28)

Many scholars have been influenced by Bacon’s division, although they diverge

¹²⁴ Following Bacon’s tradition, some scholars such as P. S. Minear call the Gospel of Matthew a “Teacher’s Gospel.” This understanding emphasizes the discourses of Matthew as Jesus’ teachings. See Minear’s book, *Matthew: The Teacher’s Gospel* (New York: Pilgrim, 1982).

¹²⁵ Ibid., 81

¹²⁶ Ibid., xxii-xxiii.

from his theory in certain details. For example, Paul Gaechter (1963) and Philippe Roland (1972) favor the alternate order of discourse-narrative rather than Bacon's narrative-discourse format.¹²⁷ This is partially explained by the fact that the narrative-discourse format is a little forced. For example, the narrative-discourse format is supposed to link Matthew 8-9 to Matthew 10, but any interpretation of this link has not been satisfactory.¹²⁸ That is, based on Bacon's theory, Matthew 8-9 should be understood in relation to Matthew 5-7, so that Jesus' words are followed by his deeds. In reality, however, Matthew 8-9 does not engage the Sermon on the Mount in any direct way and is really not about apostleship, but rather demonstrates different aspects of Jesus' miraculous performance. Certainly, Matthew 8:18-22 or 9:9-17 are clearly related with apostleship, but they are very small in relation to the large material given over to the miracle stories which celebrate Jesus' mercy and power. This explains why Philippe Roland starts with narrative and proceeds to discourse so that there is unity of flow and dramatic progression in each book.¹²⁹ This conviction leads him to join Matthew 5-7 and Matthew 8-9 as the first book titled as *The Kingdom of God is at Hand*. He sees a special unity of content in that the disciples simply follow Jesus along with the crowds and do not proclaim the gospel.¹³⁰ In the same way, there is no distinction between disciples and the crowds in Matthew 5-7, the crowds are always present with the disciples in the

¹²⁷ Paul Gaechter, *Das Matthaus Evangelium* (Wien: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1962); Philippe Roland, "From the Genesis to the End of the World: The Plan of Matthew's Gospel," *BTB* 2 (1972), 155-176.

¹²⁸ For more detailed criticism about the alternation theory of narrative-discourse, see Kingsbury, *Structure*, 2-5; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew*, 27-35; W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 14-25.

¹²⁹ Roland, "The Plan of Matthew's Gospel," 157.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 159-60.

narrative section. While this explanation looks better than the narrative-discourse format of Bacon, there is a serious problem with the structure proposed for the conclusion. Roland and Gaechter categorize Chapter 23 as a part of narrative section (19:1-23:39) to emphasize the fifth part as “final victory.”¹³¹

This division too is artificial because scholars uniformly identify Chapter 23 as discourse, regardless of whether or not it should be linked to Chapters 24-25. This forced interpretation is necessitated by their theory of an alternation of narrative-discourse in Matthew. This larger focus takes Roland away from the question of the relationship among the nine miracle stories in Matthew 8-9 and how that placement should be theologically interpreted.

Other scholars work with a theory that Matthew actually presents not five discourses but six or seven.¹³² Traditionally the theory of five narrative-discourse books

¹³¹ Roland's understanding of the structure is as follows:

Prologue: From the Old to the New Testament

1. Infancy Narrative (1:1-2:23)
2. John the Baptist and Jesus (3:1-4:16)

First Part: The Kingdom of God is at Hand

1. Introduction and Discourse (4:17-7:29)
2. Narrative section (8:1-9:34)

Second Part: The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel

1. Introduction and Discourse (9:35-10:42)
2. Narrative section (11:1-12:50)

Third Part: I will build my Church

1. Discourse (13:1-58)
2. Narrative section (14:1-17:27)

Fourth Part: The True Israel

1. Discourse (18:1-35)
2. Narrative section (19:1-23:39)

Fifth Part: The Final Victory

1. Discourse (24:1-25:46)
2. Narrative section (26:1-28:20)

See Roland, “The Plan of Matthew's Gospel,” 156-57; Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, 16-17; 721-758.

¹³² For those scholars who find six discourses, see Kingsbury, *Structure*, 4 footnote 26.

seemed to support the view that Matthew intended to compare Jesus to Moses by presenting his own “Pentateuch” as it were. A classic example is Bacon, who describes what he sees the five books of Matthew as “five books of the commandments of Moses, [where] each body of law [is] introduced by a narrative of considerable length.”¹³³ The real problem with this theory of a parallel between Matthew’s narrative-discourse format and Moses is the obvious fact that there is no obviously separated narrative-discourse format in the Pentateuch.¹³⁴ Moreover, as we note above, scholars such as H. B. Green see Chapter 11 and Chapter 23 as independent discourses, which would result in a total of 7 discourses in the Gospel of Matthew.¹³⁵ Here we must note that in Green’s efforts to treat Matthew 1-10 and Matthew 12-28 as a pair of chiasms he went too far in arguing that Chapter 11 came from “the assorted materials [of Q] like the five [discourses] and it should be categorized a discourse.”¹³⁶ J. Merle Rife, accepting Green’s division of Chapter 23 as an independent discourse, divides the so-called “fifth book” (Chapters 23-25) into two different discourses: the first, “Against Scholars & Pharisees” (Chapter 23) and the second, “The Last Things” (Chapter 24-25).¹³⁷ Merle argues for the division based on the change of place and time that separate the two as well as on content. He notes that Chapter 23 does not have any relationship with the judgment to come. This observation further challenges the argument that there is a clearly divided narrative-

¹³³ Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, 81.

¹³⁴ Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 33.

¹³⁵ H. B. Green, “The Structure of St. Matthew’s Gospel,” in *Studia Evangelica* IV (1968), 48.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 49.

¹³⁷ J. Merle Rife, *The Nature and Origin of the New Testament* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1975), 78.

discourse format in the Gospel of Matthew.

All these different analyses of the supposed narrative-discourse format in Matthew illustrate that serious problems attend this theory. One may affirm with Bacon that Matthew expanded the sections of Mark's gospel to include discourses, but evidence does not support a view of Matthew as a sort of compendium of Jesus' commandments. In other words, one must force the evidence to place an overemphasis on the discourses as opposed to the narratives in interpreting the Gospel of Matthew.

With respect to the narratives in Matthew, it must be recognized that the Infancy narratives that open the gospel and the Post-resurrection appearances that conclude the gospel are hardly secondary in importance! Scholars who focus on the narrative-discourse model, and usually emphasize the discourses fail to give proper attention to the place of the major narratives that hold pride of place.

This is certainly not to deny the importance of the major discourses in the Gospel of Matthew but only to say that their importance should not be exaggerated to the detriment of the content of the gospel. After all, out of the twenty-eight chapters of the gospel, discourses make up less than one third of the material (nine chapters: 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 23-25). While these discourses hold important clues to Matthew's own theology, they are not a "Pentateuch." To say this in another way, they are not the main purpose of the gospel. Of course, aside from the larger speeches it is certainly true that within the narratives the discourse that occurs reveals character and "soul."¹³⁸ But with attention to the speeches in Matthew, it goes too far to claim that the primary importance of Matthew

¹³⁸ Discourse is indispensable especially in ancient literature. For example, we can see a lot of discourses in Homer's *Odyssey* or *Illiad*.

lies in discourses, not in narratives. Rather, just as the evangelist has created the gospel from his sources, it is plain to see that it is with both blocks of speeches, blocks of narratives, and the interweaving of both throughout the gospel that the evangelist creates the wholeness of the gospel message.

Most scholars would agree that what is most important in an exegesis of the gospel is to note how the author was moved by his own vision to arrange the material and redact it in order to effect this theological message. As we have already demonstrated above, the sole focus on the alternation of narration and blocks of discourse is insufficient. Moreover, again as we have noted above, these theories of alternation result in a singular focus on the content of the discourses while the narrative blocks are largely ignored.

Yet these theories that try to uncover Matthew's structure stand on sound method since structure is an author's interpretive tool. In examining Matthew's decisions for the structuring of his sources, however, a number of factors have to be weighed. Just as in the case of the scholars who have tried to uncover Matthew's structure mainly from geographical and chronological approaches, any one-sided focus is insufficient to secure the structure proposed by the evangelist. So, for example, approaches that place an ecclesiastically influenced control on the gospel to sum it up as "the Handbook of Church,"¹³⁹ recognize the sound teaching Matthew provides, the main teachings of the Christian community, but at the same time, such an appellation takes away from the

¹³⁹ P. S. Minear subtitled his commentary of Matthew as "The Teacher's Gospel." See his book, *Matthew: The Teacher's Gospel* (New York: Pilgrim, 1982). This ecclesiological understanding of the gospel is the main stream of this approach. While we cannot neglect this tendency in the gospel, basically the gospel has a story.

gospel its rich character as an account in its own right: it isn't "a handbook."

It is clear that Matthew draws on Mark's gospel, at times accepting its order and text, but at other times creatively rearranging the material, dividing the narratives and the order of pronouncement stories, as well as moving sayings of Jesus from their location to serve other speeches or narratives. To claim that Matthew's motivation was to create an alternation of narrative and discourse blocks misses the more sophisticated and theologically motivated reasons for his patterns of regular change to Mark and Q.

Examining the Structural Clues in Matthew 8-9

It is very rare to see a detailed structural analysis of Matthew 8-9. In narrative-discourse (or discourse-narrative) theories, Matthew 8-9 is either an introduction for the discourse in Matthew 10 (in narrative-discourse theory) or the conclusion of Matthew 5-7 (discourse-narrative theory). An example of those who hold to a narrative-discourse pattern, Bacon regards Matthew 10 (the Missionary Discourse) as the "Missionary's Handbook of apostolic times" and Matthew 8-9 as the introduction.¹⁴⁰ For Bacon that "introduction" "consists of stories of the exorcisms and healing miracles of Jesus, interspersed with a few anecdotes of the calling of disciples to accompany him."¹⁴¹ Matthew's concern is just to demonstrate that Jesus' superhuman authority is transmitted to his twelve disciples and therefore to his later followers who travel mission journeys in Jesus' name. Notice that his attention is on the overall content of the material in Matthew 8-9, and not the significance of the way Matthew chose and arranged the nine miracles.

¹⁴⁰ Bacon, *Studies in Matthew*, 187; 190.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 187.

Bacon subdivides Matthew 8-9 into three parts: 1) 8:1-17 Three typical healings of Jesus, 2) 8:18-9:8 Three works of superhuman authority, 3) 9:9-34 Faith Wonders,¹⁴² but there is no examination of Matthew's intent in structuring the material in that manner, no search for any distinctive role to each section. Since his focus is really on the service the miracle stories provide to Matthew 10's Mission speech, he identifies the function of the miracles in that manner. Thus 8:19-22 is the preface of the second group of miracles, preparing the would-be disciples for the severity of the mission. In like manner, he explains that Matthew has added 9:9-13 because it refers to the general theme of apostleship, while 9:14-17 is situated as it is because it is closely connected with the preceding context in the gospel of Mark.¹⁴³ Thus, Bacon sees the function of Matthew 8-9 as 1) inspiring faith for the disciples to perform miracles and 2) preparing them to expect hardship.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, as Bacon says of Matthew 8-9, it is "the most appropriate possible prelude to the Discourse of chapter 10."

It can be said that whether scholars adopt the narrative-discourse or discourse-narrative structure theory, none of them really examines Matthew's particular selection and structuring of the nine-miracles in relation to each other, but only as it serves these larger questions of gospel structure. To take a more recent example, Donald J. Selby, who supports Bacon's narrative-discourse format, also sees the miracle stories as they function for the mission speech of Matthew 10. The first three miracle stories show that Jesus' ministry is for all humankind because the healed leper is a Jew, the centurion's

¹⁴² Ibid., 187.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 361.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 362.

servant is a gentile, and Peter's mother-in-law is a disciple's family member.¹⁴⁵ To Jesus, it does not matter what kind of people he should deal with. The second group of miracle stories is connected with Jonah's mission to Nineveh, the gentile rejection of the mission, and Jesus' prerogative as Son of God to forgive sin. The final cycle of miracles demonstrates true faith, which is necessary for missionaries. He agrees with Bacon that the focus of Matthew 8-9 is really on the service of the miracles to Chapter 10.

To turn to an example of those scholars who hold for a discourse-narrative structure, Paul Gaechter sees Matthew 8-9 as a follow-up reflection of the discourse in Matthew 5-7 to reveal Jesus' godlike power as the Messiah in Israel. So the discourse of Matthew 5-7 describes Jesus' demand for the ethical life of his people (not Jesus' authority in words), while the narrative of Matthew 8-9 reveals Jesus' power in Israel to gain recognition (not Jesus' authority in deed).¹⁴⁶ With respect to Matthew 8-9, he follows the structure of three groups of three miracle stories with two fragments between each group.¹⁴⁷ However, he accepts the three cycles of three miracle stories as very natural, in other words, needing no more detailed explanation.

Francis W. Beare also recognizes blocks of narrative and discourse in Matthew and, like the scholars above, emphasizes the importance of the speech material over the narratives. Yet he stands apart from the others because he does not try to impose a strict structure of either narrative-discourse or discourse-narrative to explain the evangelist's

¹⁴⁵ Donald J. Selby, *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 128.

¹⁴⁶ Gaechter, *Das Matthäus Evangelium*, 260-261.

¹⁴⁷ While this structure was popular among the scholars who support the alternation of narratives and discourses, especially the alternation of discourse-narrative, they have not made any concrete analysis of the relationship of these groups as the thematic approaches did. They might have thought that it was enough just to show that these groups show Jesus' authority as the pair of Jesus' word in Matthew 5-7.

arrangement of material. He focuses instead on the flow of story and therefore his structure shows a big difference from those of other scholars who follow the narrative-discourse format.¹⁴⁸ The difficulty with his method, however, is that he comes to the gospel convinced of its character as “a manual of instruction in the Christian way of life.”¹⁴⁹ With that focus, his attention is given over to the particular teachings of Jesus in the gospel. The miracle accounts are rather incidental to his focus and therefore little real attention is afforded to Matthew 8-9.

While he also finds “a sequence of miracle stories arranged in three groups of three stories each, with non-miraculous anecdotes to divide the groups,”¹⁵⁰ he sees the “symbolic significance” of the message of Jesus.¹⁵¹ His observations on their form include identification of the manner in which Matthew has redacted his sources, such as shortening them and focusing on the miraculous.¹⁵² The significance of their selection and the relationship of the miracle stories and units to each other are not explored.

Summary

Scholars who follow the narrative-discourse or discourse-narrative approaches to address Matthew 8-9 show a greater sophistication over the geographical and chronological controls used by others in the past. While they recognize three cycles of miracles in the set of nine miracles in Matthew 8-9, these scholars are focused on how

¹⁴⁸ Francis W. Beare, *The Gospel according to Matthew: Translation, Introduction and Commentary* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), Contents.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 203.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 202-203.

the miracle stories function as either an introduction to the Mission discourse of Matthew 10 or a follow up to the Sermon on the Mount discourse of Matthew 5-7. Matthew's intent in the selection and placement of the miracles, the creation of the three units, and the meaning of their relationship to each other have yet to be explored.

Conceptual Approaches

Some approaches have been developed to somehow fill the gap when chronological or narrative-discourse approaches prove inadequate. Although the history of scholarship is quite short, these conceptual approaches represent a new main stream in studying the Gospel of Matthew. The main focus is the Matthean understanding of salvation history,¹⁵³ which is usually presented as a three stage division: (1) The time of God's promises to Israel; (2) The Life of Jesus; (3) The Church is begun.¹⁵⁴ The problem with this method is that Matthew 8-9 is examined only against a backdrop of the macrostructure, which denies to the study the possibility that the evangelist was motivated by a dynamic which requires a "microscopic" confinement to the two chapters themselves. In the following we will illustrate the point by examining the contribution of some representative scholars who discuss Matthew 8-9 against the backdrop of salvation

¹⁵³ There are some exceptions. For example, Wolfgang Trilling approaches the Gospel of Matthew from the viewpoint of "true Israel" (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*. New York: Herder & Herder, 1969) and Daniel Patte from the viewpoint of Matthew's "conviction" (*The Gospel according to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), but both presuppose the overall control of salvation history.

¹⁵⁴ David B. Howell groups scholars of the salvation history into two: 1) tripartite schemes of salvation history and 2) two-fold schemes of salvation history. Among the first group are Georg Strecker, Rolf Walker, and John P. Meier while Hurbert Frankemöle and Jack D. Kingsbury belong to the second group. See his book, *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 55-92.

history.¹⁵⁵

Wolfgang Trilling

According to Wolfgang Trilling, the central concept of Matthew is the “true Israel.” The Gospel of Matthew reveals not only the history of Israel but also its goal: “the true people of God from all nations.”¹⁵⁶ The Israel of old rejected Jesus as the Messiah and so lost the heavenly kingdom and identity as God’s people. The true Israel began as a small group of Jesus’ disciples, but now is playing a key role in proclaiming the good news to all nations. Therefore, according to Trilling, Matthew 28:18-20 is the key message in understanding the Gospel of Matthew.¹⁵⁷ The Gospel is not just a story book about Jesus’ life, but more importantly a book of Jesus’ teachings to be learned and practiced by all true Israel.

Trilling thinks that Matthew was the earliest evangelist to show interest in Jesus’ teachings.¹⁵⁸ Jesus is the Messiah who is prophesied in the Old Testament and at the same time he is a “faithful” interpreter of the Mosaic laws unlike the scribes or Pharisees. In other words, Jesus is a new Moses who proclaims a new law that fulfills and substitutes the old laws of Moses. Therefore Jesus is the founder of the new Israel with a new law/Torah he has given to them himself. This ecclesial lens colors Trilling’s interpretation of the entirety of Matthew’s gospel. Trilling sees the gospel as Jesus’

¹⁵⁵ For the general information of these approaches, see Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure*, 25-36; Bauer, *Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 45-55.

¹⁵⁶ Wolfgang Trilling, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969). trans. by Kevin Smyth, Vol. 1, xi.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., xi.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., v-vi.

teachings to his church and this perspective is evident in his division of Matthew 5-10 into three sections:¹⁵⁹

- I. The True Doctrine of the True Justice (5:1-7:29)
- II. The Deeds of the Messiah (8:1-9:34)
- III. The Teaching on Discipleship (9:35-11:1)

This emphasis on Jesus' teachings will recall Bacon's narrative-discourse theory.¹⁶⁰

Trilling interprets the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) as "the true doctrine of the true justice," that is, it is the content, the "doctrine" that he argues as the primary issue for Matthew and not the overall new authority of Jesus. He creates a comparison between the Torah of Moses and the New Torah/Law of Jesus. These are the guidelines, the policies, the rules for the Church.

This ecclesiological interpretation is on display also in Matthew 10. There in the "Mission Discourse" he views the Apostles as "the prototypes of every true disciple of Jesus."¹⁶¹ This speech is supposed to be a mandate for all members of the Church. This focus, then, is trained on the laws rather than on Jesus giving permission to the apostles to heal, for example.

It is clear in his treatment of Matthew 8-9, however, that Trilling finds it difficult to illustrate an ecclesiastical theme. His division of the chapters into three cycles of miracles (8:1-17; 8:18-9:13; 9:14-34) is left without analysis according to any specific criterion, just the sequencing, first, second, and third cycles. He remains silent about the

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 59-198.

¹⁶⁰ It is similar in that teachings are generally found in the discourse sections and are emphasized as the main theme in the Gospel of Matthew, but Trilling does not approach the Gospel's structure from the viewpoint of the alternation of discourse-narrative.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 173.

purpose of the three cycles he presents and one can only suppose it is because it cannot be explained with the concept of Jesus' teachings. When he titles Matthew 8-9 as "Deeds of the Messiah," he seems to use "deed" in *contrast* to Jesus' teachings, not as two inseparable facets of Jesus' authority. Therefore, the two interpolated pericopae of 8:18-22 and 9:9-14 are seen only as supporting the miracle stories without any particular message of their own. He links 8:18-22 (the would-be followers of Jesus) with the following pericope, 8:23-27 (the Stilling of the Storm) by saying that if the former passage gives "the true hallmarks of true following [of Jesus]," the latter demonstrates "how they should prove themselves in practice in the event on the lake."¹⁶² He really cannot explain how these function in the three cycles he identifies. According to Trilling, Matt 9:9-13 (the call of Matthew and Jesus' eating with 'sinners') belongs to the second cycle of miracles, just as Matt 8:18-22 does. But he has no explanation as to why this particular pericope would be moved from its Markan position to serve in this set of miracles. So it is more a matter of describing connections he sees, rather than analyzing Matthew's overriding plan for the chapters.

Actually, Trilling's interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew has the same problem as t Bacon's narrative-discourse theory.¹⁶³ He neglected the character of the Gospel as a story with his singular focus on Jesus' teachings. The Great Commission of 28:18-20 with its command, "teaching them [all nations] to observe all that I have commanded you" is given a command over the entirety of the gospel so that it must override other sections where the theme of instruction is simply not there. In addition, it is doubtful if

¹⁶² Ibid., 151.

¹⁶³ For more criticism against Trilling, see Bauer, 49.

“the true Israel” can be the *key* concept of the Gospel. Matthew sees Jesus as far surpassing Moses so that the comparison between Jesus’ teachings and those of Moses are not a major issue defining the intent of the gospel. A story is underway, and all its elements have their own message. Any analysis has to be fluid enough to follow the evangelist’s lead.

With respect to Matthew 8-9, Trilling did not try to find any drama in the structure of the miracle stories. We have noted that he did not even explain why Matthew 8-9 should be divided into the three cycles of miracles; he might have just followed the popular method of dividing the miracle stories in this manner. While this can be expected of scholars who are less interested in narrative than in wisdom teachings, the fact is that Trilling put Matthew 8-9 in the corner as an insignificant part in his story of true Israel. Whether the Matthean community performed the same miracles as Jesus did and allowed to his disciples was not a question he entertained to check whether miracles stories could possibly mean this, his subject remained how Jesus was the new Moses in giving a new Torah to the Church. As a result, the discipleship mentioned in Matthew 8:18-22 with its volunteers and in 9:9-14 where Matthew is called are forcibly fit into the miracle stories in spite of their non-miraculous character.

Jack D. Kingsbury

The method of uncovering the intent of Matthew’s organization and intent by focusing on the evangelist’s time marker, “from that time Jesus began...” as seen in 4:17

and 16:21 has received abundant scholarly comment,¹⁶⁴ but we will limit the discussion to Kingsbury as the strongest representative of this position. While Kingsbury acknowledges the contributions of E. Lohmeyer, N. B. Stonehouse, and E. Krentz,¹⁶⁵ he claims that he himself is “the first [person] to use this threefold division [of Matthew 1:1-4:16, 4:17-16:20, 16:21-28:20] so as to determine the nature and purpose of the Gospel.”¹⁶⁶ David Bauer affirms his claim, commenting that Kingsbury’s use of the formula to reveal the gospel structure offers “by far the most consistent and thorough presentation,”¹⁶⁷ a view held by many after Kingsbury’s publication.¹⁶⁸

Kingsbury’s ultimate goal in establishing the gospel structure is to reconstruct the evangelist’s understanding of the history of salvation. For him, the “απο τότε”¹⁶⁹ of 4:17 and 16:21 marks “the beginning of a new period of time.”¹⁷⁰ In other words, this formula, combined with the verb *ἀρχομαι*, expresses Jesus’ inauguration of a new movement or era in the history of salvation. So, just as 4:17 begins Jesus’ public ministry

¹⁶⁴ See F. Neirynck, “ΑΠΟ ΤΟΤΕ ΗΡΞΑΤΟ And The Structure of Matthew,” Van Segbroeck ed. *Evangelica II: 1982-1991 Collected Essays by Frans Neirynck* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1991), 141-145; Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure*, 7-25; Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 40-45.

¹⁶⁵ E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956), 1, 64, 264; N. B. Stonehouse, *The Witness of Matthew and Mark to Christ* (London: Tyndale, 1944); E. Krenz, “The Extent of Matthew’s Prologue,” in *JBL* 83 (1964), 409-415.

¹⁶⁶ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure*, ix-x.

¹⁶⁷ Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel*, 41.

¹⁶⁸ Kingsbury, “The Structure of Matthew’s Gospel and His Concept of Salvation-History,” in *CBQ* 35 (1973), 451-474; idem, *Matthew: Structure*, 1-39.

¹⁶⁹ This phrase is found two more times elsewhere in the New Testament: Luke 16:16 and Matthew 26:16, but according to Kingsbury the function of marking a new beginning is observed only in Matthew 4:17 and 16:21. See his book, *Matthew: Structure*, 8.

¹⁷⁰ Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure*, 8.

to Israel, so 16:21 begins the time of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Thus, Kingsbury's outline of the Gospel is as follows:¹⁷¹

- I. 1:1-4:16 The Person of Jesus Messiah
- II. 4:17-16:20 The Proclamation of Jesus Messiah
- III. 16:21-28:20 The Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Messiah

After demonstrating the manner in which the gospel reflects this structure,¹⁷² Kingsbury elucidates its meaning. Matthew is seen to divide salvation history into two eras: (1) the time of Israel, which begins with Abraham, and (2) the time of salvation inaugurated by the birth of Jesus.¹⁷³ Notice that unlike the gospel of Luke and Acts where the resurrected Jesus is said to ascend into heaven (Luke 24:50-52 and Acts 1:1-11), the post-resurrection narratives feature Jesus' closing promise, "I am always with you to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20)." From this Kingsbury concludes that Matthew is not interested in the era of the church on earth as a separate epoch. The Gospel of Matthew is rather oriented to Christology, not ecclesiology.¹⁷⁴ Since Kingsbury views Matthew's gospel from the perspective of its Christology, the title of Jesus as Son of God is affirmed as "an exceptionally prominent Christological strain in Matthew's Gospel."¹⁷⁵ It is through this lens that Kingsbury understands Matthew 8-9. If Matthew 5-7 is the teaching of Jesus, Son of God, then Matthew 8-9 is the Son of God's healing activity. Influenced by his theme of a new inauguration of salvation in

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷² Ibid., 12-25

¹⁷³ Ibid., 35.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 36.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 42.

Jesus the Son of God, he sees the miracles of Matthew 8-9 as “ten mighty acts of deliverance” as Jesus, Son of God, heals with the authority given to him by God.¹⁷⁶

Matthew 10, the Mission Speech, is a widening out of such a mission through the authorization of his disciples to share in these acts. It is clear, however, that the discipleship theme plays a secondary role in his treatment of Matthew 8-9.

Kingsbury sees the larger parallel between the number, the cluster of Jesus’ miracles, and the way it recalls for him the miracles of Moses, but he does not come up close to the actual arrangement the evangelist gave to those ten miracle stories.¹⁷⁷ The exercise of Jesus’ authority becomes a lesson to the disciples whom he will also authorize; he states, “through healing Jesus summons the people of Israel to repentance and to the Kingdom...also in exercising power over the forces of nature, he enables the disciples to catch a glimpse of the divine authority he is ever ready to share with them.”¹⁷⁸

As stated above, Kingsbury’s focus is on Jesus as Son of God who performs the miracles and not on the significance of the miracles in light of the continuing Church and the apostles who will effect that continuance. Since Jesus is with the church forever (28:20), there is no need to view the church as a separate entity carrying on without Jesus present.

It must be noted that although Kingsbury appeals to Jesus’ role as Son of God in

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 63.

¹⁷⁷ He seems to have abandoned his fourfold analysis of Matthew 8-9 in his article, “Observations on the “Miracle Chapters” of Matthew 8-9,” in *CBQ* 40 (1978), 559-573.

¹⁷⁸ J. D. Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 72.

Matthew 8-9, in 4:17-10:42 there is no mention of Jesus as Son of God except in the demons' shouts to Jesus in the exorcism of Matthew 8:28-34. His argument that Jesus is presented as Son of God rests on two grounds. First is Jesus' title "Lord," for while unbelievers address Jesus as "teacher" (8:19; 9:11), believers call Jesus "Lord" (8:2, 6, 8, 21, 25; 9:28). Since the title "Lord" is generally used when healing authority is attributed to Jesus, Kingsbury presumes that Jesus is also being recognized as Son of God when people address him as "lord" throughout Matthew 4:17-10:42.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, he is not able to show that the evangelist himself describes Jesus as Son of God in the nine miracle stories.

Whether Kingsbury's starting point marker "from that time on" in 4:17 and 16:21 can become a hallmark of showing a new era in Jesus' ministry is controversial, and some scholars have pointed out the problems.¹⁸⁰ For example, his twofold division of salvation history is problematic. It seems wrong to interpret "I will be with you until the end of time" literally. The original audience knew that Jesus was not with them physically and that Jesus does not directly keep teaching them. Another difficulty is his emphasis on Jesus' title as Son of God. While it is true that this title has importance in the Gospel, many other titles are given importance such as Son of Man, Son of David, Lord, and Messiah. It is misleading to interpret Matthew's Christology from the viewpoint of only one of these titles.

Kingsbury seems to have given up his previous proposal of four divisions in

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 53-55.

¹⁸⁰ The most thorough criticism is from Frans Neirynck. See F. Neirynck, "ΑΠΟ ΤΟΤΕ ΗΡΞΑΤΟ And The Structure of Matthew," Van Segbroeck ed. *Evangelica II: 1982-1991 Collected Essays by Frans Neirynck* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1991), 141-182.

Matthew 8-9 in his previous article, “Observations on the Miracle Chapters,”¹⁸¹ since his later writings never appeal to it again. This is probably due to the fact that the fourfold thematic interpretation of Matthew 8-9 does not fit the newer focus on the Jesus “Son of God” Christology. In subsequent writings he focuses on Jesus deeds, but it is hard to say that the concern of Matthew 8-9 is only Jesus’ healing activity. While we cannot precisely read his thoughts about Matthew 8-9 because of the lack of detailed comments, his application of “Son of God” to Matthew 8-9 as the main title goes unsupported by the text itself and Kingsbury’s interpretation of “Lord” as equal to the appellation Son of God is not persuasive.

John Meier

John Meier’s point of departure is 10:5-6; 15:24; and 28:16-20. According to Meier, the first two verses show Jesus’ ministry as being limited to Israel. However, after Jesus’ death and resurrection, Gentile evangelism is commissioned in 28:16-20.¹⁸² Therefore, he thinks that there are three stages of salvation history: (1) the inbreaking of the kingdom, (2) the full breaking out of the kingdom, (3) the full manifestation of the kingdom at the end of time.¹⁸³ In the first stage, Jesus’ earthly ministry is limited to Israel; in the second stage, the kingdom of God has fully opened to all nations through Jesus’ death and resurrection; in the third stage, the full manifestation will be achieved at the end. Therefore, contrary to Kingsbury, the full manifestation of the kingdom will

¹⁸¹ Kingsbury, “Observations on the Miracle Chapters,” 559-573.

¹⁸² John Meier, “Salvation History in Matthew: In Search of a Starting Point,” in *CBQ* 37 (1975), 204-207.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 210-215.

have to wait “until the end of the age” (Matt 28:20).

Meier divides the gospel into two parts: 1) Jesus’ earthly ministry (1-25), and 2) the passion, death and resurrection—the turning point of the ages (26-28).¹⁸⁴ To Meier, the death-resurrection of Jesus is an important turning point in salvation history and is to be understood as an apocalyptic event. It opens a new age in which the Great Mission of 28:16-20 should be sought.¹⁸⁵ In analyzing Jesus’ earthly ministry he follows the narrative-discourse structure of Bacon and therefore Meier also emphasizes the discourse material over the narratives as many other supporters of narrative-discourse pattern do. To Meier, Jesus is the teacher of Christian morality, which is why the title “Son of Man” is critical in understanding the message of the Gospel.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, for Meier, Christology cannot be separated from ecclesiology in the Gospel of Matthew; it is “nexus between Christ and his people, between Christology and ecclesiology.”¹⁸⁷

This understanding is also reflected in Matthew 8-9. Since he thinks that narrative-discourse pattern reflects the nexus of Christology-ecclesiology, Matthew 8-11, the second book, shows “the full bloom of the mission in Galilee” (if we regard Matthew 1-7, the initial proclamation of the kingdom, as the first book). Just as Matthew 3-4 and 5-7 show that Christology is the nexus of ecclesiology, so too are Matthew 8-9 and Matthew 10.¹⁸⁸ Christology in Matthew 8-9 is linked with Matthew 10 in that the

¹⁸⁴ John Meier, *The Vision of Matthew: Christ, Church and Morality in the First Gospel* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), vi-vii.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 26-39.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 45-51.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 43.

disciples should continue Jesus' activities. Here we can say that Meier is concerned with the close relationship between Jesus and the church.

In Matthew 8-9, according to Meier, the main theme is Christology, but one interesting observation is that it is a "title-less Christology." Of course, there are two exceptions: "Lord" (8:2, 6, 8, 21, 25; 9:28) and "teacher" (8:19; 9:11), but the first is used in the vocative case and the second is used by those who do not have full faith in Jesus.¹⁸⁹ Instead of these, Meier focuses on the title "Son of Man" in 8:20 and 9:6. This title was chosen by Jesus himself and it is linked with the servant-figure in Isaiah who is "a lowly servant among his people, associating with sinners, showing mercy to the outcast or mistreated."¹⁹⁰ Meier tries to understand Matthew 8-9 from the viewpoint of "Son of Man" rather than "Son of God."

As to the structure of Matthew 8-9, Meier observes three trios of miracles with three intermediate buffers.¹⁹¹

The first trio of miracle stories (8:1-17)¹⁹²
 The first buffer: the cost of discipleship (8:18-22)
 The second trio of miracle stories (8:23-9:8)
 The second buffer: the joy of discipleship (9:9-17)
 The third trio of miracle stories (9:18-34)
 The third buffer: discipleship leads to mission (9:35-38)

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 67-68.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 69.

¹⁹¹ Meier, *Matthew*, 79-101.

¹⁹² To Meier, 7:28-29 does not belong to the Sermon on the Mount of Matthew 5-7, but unfortunately he does not explain at all why he made such an unusual division. Probably this came from his separation of discourse and narrative. See his book, *Vision of Matthew*, 67. In his later commentary, *Matthew* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1980), he arranges this part into the section of the Sermon on the Mount without any explanation.

In the first trio of miracle stories he focuses on the three types of people who Jesus healed: a leper, a Gentile soldier, and a woman. Meier links them with Son of Man as a lowly servant showing mercy to the outcast or mistreated. In the second trio of miracles he finds the climax in the third pericope where Jesus “dares to designate himself, even during his public ministry, as the transcendent Son of Man who possesses God’s own power to forgiven sins. The judicial function of the Son of Man on the last day is anticipated in the now of the public ministry.”¹⁹³ In the third trio of miracles Meier emphasizes Jesus’ ability to raise the dead as the conclusion of Matthew’s presentation of Jesus.

Meier interprets the role of three buffers as follows: in the first buffer, where the title “Son of Man” first occurs (8:20), Meier sees the link between the first trio and the first buffer¹⁹⁴ because Jesus is described as a humble being who is deprived even of basic existence. In spite of the miracles in the first trio, Jesus still remains the lowly servant. In the second buffer (the joy of discipleship [9:9-17]), Meier observes a link to the last miracle of the second trio (The Healing of the Paralytic [9:2-8]),¹⁹⁵ because while the forgiveness of sin brings joy to his disciples, this joy is rejected by the scribes, the Pharisees, and John’s disciples. In the third buffer (discipleship leads to mission [9:35-38]) he observes two directions. Matthew 9:35 completes an inclusion that begins with 4:23 and summarizes the narrative of Matthew 8-9, but the concluding aphorism in Matthew 9:36-38 (the aphoristic teachings on the shepherd and the harvester), also leads

¹⁹³ Meier, *Vision of Matthew*, 71.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 70.

¹⁹⁵ Meier, *Matthew*, 93.

to the missionary discourse in Matthew 10.

One basic problem of Meier's analysis is that he relies heavily only on several passages in understanding the Gospel of Matthew: 10:5-6, 15:24 and 28:16-20.¹⁹⁶ There is a division that negates the overall narrative cohesion of the gospel flow and message. The rather wooden division of Jesus' ministry into two stages, first only to Israel, then to all nations,¹⁹⁷ may reflect the final climax of the gospel, but the seeming strict separation of Jesus passion, death and resurrection from the mission of Jesus due to the emphasis placed on Matthew 26-28 leads away from the unitary character of the gospel and the manner in which the evangelist has deliberately interwoven traditions and themes. Following Mark, Matthew has Jesus predict his death and resurrection three times during Jesus' earthly ministry, which creates the connection to the expectation of its fulfillment in the upcoming passion story. By focusing on only some key verses related to his concept of salvation history and on the title "Son of Man," he, just as Kingsbury did, loses the balance of the evangelist's story.

Meier's attention to structure is more advanced than that of Kingsbury and he emphasizes the close relationship between Christology and ecclesiology in Matthew 8-10. Since he saw Matthew 8-9 serving Christology as the nexus of ecclesiology in Matthew 10, he found three trios of miracle stories and three buffers. The question is why the evangelist arranged the material into three trios and three buffers, a question Meier does not answer.

¹⁹⁶ For more detailed criticism, see Bauer, 53-54.

¹⁹⁷ This tendency of depending on several verses is a common factor of conceptual approaches. The Great Commission in 28:16-20 plays an especially important role in these approaches.

Other problems attend his analysis. First, his understanding of the relationship between the three trios is not clear. In the first trio, he emphasized Jesus' lowly servanthood toward the outcast or mistreated, such as a leper, a gentile soldier and a woman. But in the second trio he found the climax in Jesus' ability to forgive sin, as in Matthew 9:2-8, the final story of the trio, but he does not explain what kind of climax it is meant to be. In the third trio Meier said that the first story showed Jesus' ability to raise the dead as the conclusion. He seems to think that raising the dead is the climax of Jesus' ministry in miracles. It is not clear at all, given Matthew's redaction of the Mark 2:1-12, that Matthew would consider raising someone from the dead as greater than the power to forgive someone's sins. While the Greco-Roman world holds various stories of the dead being resuscitated, the authority to forgive sins is unique and limited to God's authority. In addition, this story is followed by the healing stories of the blind and mute. So Meier's interpretation of the three trios does not suggest any clear direction. While his interpretation of the first trio shows a tight understanding, his explanation of the second and third trios does not demonstrate any consistent pattern of meaning in the arrangement of the miracle stories.

Second, the role of the three buffers is also ambiguous. What is the relationship of these buffers to the three trios? While he does not explain why there are three buffers in Matthew 8-9, Meier assumes that these intermediary aphorisms are meant to support the previous set of miracle stories. For example, when Meier proposes that the first buffer shows the lowly Jesus who has no house to take rest in, the text itself does not underline that point. Rather there are two different responses to two different would-be

followers. Likewise, in his comments on the purpose of the second buffer Meier holds that it shows the joyful result of Jesus' forgiving sin, but this amounts to something of an exaggeration. Furthermore, the interpretation then neglects the discussions between Jesus and the Pharisees and John's disciples. Meier gives the third buffer a *transitional* role, linking Matthew 8-9 and 10, but it is curious why he did not just call this passage the conclusion of Matthew 8-9 instead of a buffer. In short, Meier cannot provide an explanation that takes into account the many aspects of the material that Matthew has positioned in chapters 8-9.

Conclusion

Most studies of Matthew 8-9 based upon salvation history emphasize ecclesiology over Christology, as Bauer points out.¹⁹⁸ Trilling emphasized Jesus' teachings as what a true Israel should know and follow; Meier accentuated the nexus of Christology and ecclesiology.¹⁹⁹ Their understanding is closely related to the recognition of salvation history rather than the text itself. They generally depend on several isolated key passages that then control the organization of the material. The degree to the strict division of the gospel along the lines of salvation history results in sidelining the narratives and their own individual statements, apart from salvation history or the patterns which are claimed by these scholars.²⁰⁰ The real problem is that their attempts to see the gospel in the light of salvation history must overlook some material in order to showcase the pericopae that

¹⁹⁸ Bauer, 54.

¹⁹⁹ Of course, Kingsbury exceptionally emphasized Christology according to his understanding of the salvation history into two eras. This seems to come from his analysis of the Gospel that emphasizes the development of the story through the superscriptions. His focus is on narrative rather than discourse.

²⁰⁰ David B. Howell, *Matthew's Inclusive Story: A Study in the Narrative Rhetoric of the First Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 90.

will bolster their view. These analyses may hold some elements of truth about concerns in the gospel, but in the end their attempts prove inadequate to explain the evangelist's choices.

Threefold Division Approaches According to Modern Literary Theories

Some scholars apply the newly developed modern literary theories to the interpretation of the Gospel of Matthew, although it must be said that Matthean scholars do not appeal to them in any significant way. Their particular approach is to use the signals of a developing plot to ascertain the evangelist's intended divisions in the gospel. While these approaches do not give any particular attention to the reasons for the structure of Matthew 8-9, their approach does introduce a distinctive perspective. These scholars hold that Matthew has created what may be seen as three divisions according to plot.

Bernard Combrink

Bernard Combrink rejects the approach of redaction criticism on the grounds that it focuses on the individual pericope at the sacrifice of the overview of the whole gospel. His analysis argues that if one examines the macro-text it is clear that a chiastic composition is intended. The symmetrical composition (i.e., chiastic structure) in the gospel is shown by literary clues, for example, in the repeated formula "from that time Jesus began to" in 4:17 and 16:21 as well as the repetitive pattern of five discourses and narratives.²⁰¹ Combrink addresses the narrative character of this symmetrical structure²⁰²

²⁰¹ H. J. Bernard Combrink, "The Structure of the Gospel of Matthew as Narrative," in *TynB* 34 (1983), 69-72.

when he uses the concept of “plot.” Here he is dependent on the argument for a threefold structure found in Van Dijk and Dan Via. According to Van Dijk the superstructure of a narrative is composed of (1) setting, (2) episode, and (3) evaluation.²⁰³ Via’s analysis identifies the deep narrative structure, the basic elements of any story: 1) initial situation and initial state, 2) process of amelioration or degradation, 3) goal (final state).²⁰⁴ Combrink uses but modifies these two proposals. For him, the gospel’s three stages can be identified as 1) setting [Van Dijk and Via] (Mt 1:1-4:17), 2) Complication [Via] (Mt 4:18-25:46), and 3) Resolution [Via] (Mt 26:1-28:20).²⁰⁵ According to Combrink, in this over-arching structure Matthew 8-9 “constitute a substantial contribution to the characterization of Jesus and the narrative plot.”²⁰⁶

First, to show the characterization of Jesus Combrink links 4:18-11:1 as a unit, i.e., “Jesus’ ministering to Israel in word and deed, authorizing the Twelve to continue this.”²⁰⁷ His understanding of Matthew 8-9 is first through the inclusion in 4:23 and 9:35, which is related to Jesus’ teaching (Matthew 5-7) and healing ministry (Matthew 8-9).

²⁰² The problem of his symmetrical structure is that it shows itself to be artificial in that he must force the text to fit his proposed symmetry. For example, he includes the fourth discourse of Matthew 18 in a section 16:21-20:34 while the parallel is the second discourse of Chapter 10. While he explains “the three passion predictions and a basic pattern repeated after each prediction” as the reason, this division is artificial. He also includes Chapter 23 in the section of Judgment on Israel. This section is not well harmonized with the first speech in which Jesus teaches with authority. See his article, “The Structure of Matthew as Narrative,” 70-71.

²⁰³ T. A. Van Dijk, *Macrostructures: An Interdisciplinary Study of Global Structures in Discourse, Interaction, and Cognition* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1980), 112-116.

²⁰⁴ D. O. Via, “Structure, Christology, and Ethics in Matthew,” R. A. Spencer ed. *Orientation by Disorientation: Studies in Literary Criticism and Biblical Criticism Presented in Honor of William A. Beardslee* (Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1980), 201-202.

²⁰⁵ Combrink, “Matthew as Narrative,” 75.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 81.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 80.

Then it is related to 9:35-11:1 in that Jesus authorizes the Twelve to continue the ministry in word and deed to Israel. The keywords of all these three sections focus on authority (ἐξουσία): Matthew 5-7 shows Jesus' authority in word, Matthew 8-9 demonstrates Jesus' authority in deed, and Matthew 10 describes the Twelve's reception of the authority to continue Jesus' ministry in word and deed. In this sense, we can say that Matthew 8-9 contributes to the characterization of Jesus along with Matthew 5-7.

Second, contrary to his position on Matthew 5-7 and 10, Combrink sees a substantial contribution of Matthew 8-9 to the narrative plot. While he accepts the division of three groups of three miracle stories with two sections on following Jesus (8:18-22 and 9:9-17) between, he does not explain in detail how this organization contributes to the plot. His attention is given to some tensions that occur within the narratives, such as the difficulty of following Jesus (8:34), the Gadarenes' rejection of Jesus (8:34), and the Pharisees' disapproval of Jesus (9:10). He notes that these tensions continue through the whole story of Matthew. Thus, Combrink's analysis of Matthew 8-9 does not address the reasons for the organization and how it serves the plot he claims it serves.

One of the difficulties in Combrink's approach is that the division of the gospel into three stages is not so effective. His concept of the plot cannot address the theological richness of Matthew as whole gospel. The simple divisions cannot address what is a rather complex gospel. That is, he identifies Setting (1:1-4:17) and Resolution (26:1-28:20) which take only two sections, and Complication (4:18-25:46) which take

nine sections in his symmetrical structure,²⁰⁸ but gospel message proves it cannot be brought forward by these divisions. It must be said that it is difficult to understand the relationship he proposes by his division of Setting and Resolution. The “Setting” describes Jesus’ birth and preparation of the ministry and the “Resolution” only includes Jesus’ death and resurrection, but since the Setting he presents does not offer the issue to be solved, one must ask how he can understand the death and resurrection as a “Resolution.” In the end, Combrink’s effort to identify the plot leaves much of the various redactions of Matthew, such as his organization of Matthew 8-9 and its intentions, untouched.

Ulrich Luz

Ulrich Luz starts his discussion with the rejection of the thematic approach of Held: “[Held] is hardly concerned at all with the totality of Matthew’s Gospel as the narrative frame for the miracle stories and as the key to understanding them.”²⁰⁹ Luz understands the author’s aim as “narrating a connected story” as well as collecting miracle stories to show Jesus’ deeds.²¹⁰ Therefore, it is important to Luz to see the “continuous movement between the individual stories” of miracles.

To understand the narrative structure of Matthew, Luz uses Elisabeth Gülich’s three basic elements of a narrative, which is rather similar to Combrink.²¹¹ Orientation,

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 71.

²⁰⁹ Ulrich Luz, “Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9,” 223.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 226.

²¹¹ Elisabeth Gülich, “Ansätze zu einer kommunikationsorientierten Enrahlanalyse (am Beispiel mündlicher und schriftlicher Erzähltexte),” Wolfgang Haubrichs, ed. *Ersählforschung I*, Lili Beiheft 4 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1976), 224-256.

Complication, and Resolution.²¹² Being aware of the problem of Combrink, who could not suggest the problem in the Setting that could be “solved” in the conclusion, Luz claims that Matthew 5-7 (the Sermon on the Mount) should belong to an introductory section he entitled, “Orientation.” According to Luz, the key passage is Matthew 4:23-25, which summarizes Jesus’ ministry in Galilee, and also the larger section of 1:1-4:22, which includes the infancy narratives and thus the journey of the persecuted infant Messiah into Galilee as a part of Orientation. He also includes Matthew 5-7, which presents the commandments Jesus will order his disciples to teach all nations in the Great Commission (Matt 28:20).²¹³ Thus the Orientation holds the goal of the gospel, which is to make disciples of everyone — Israel and the nations. In this way the Orientation sets up the situation that will move into the process of “Complication” and find its Resolution at the end of the gospel.

Luz sees Matthew 8-9 as the beginning of that intermediary “Complication” since it concludes with Matthew 9:33b-34 where the contrasting response of the people and the Pharisees sets up the tension. While the crowd is described as amazed, saying “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel,” the Pharisees denounce Jesus saying, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons” (Mt 9:34).²¹⁴ Luz notes that this type of contrast between the crowds and the enemies occurs again and again, such as in Matthew 12:23-23; 21:10-11, 14-17. Luz argues that from this point on Matthew shows the split

²¹² Luz, “Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9,” 152; Elisabeth Gülich, “Ansätze zu einer kommunikationsorientierten Enrahlanalyse,” 250-52.

²¹³ Luz, “Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9,” 152.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 152.

from Israel and the beginning of the disciples' community.²¹⁵

As in all the other proposals of structure by plot, Matthew 8-9 receives no attention as to the evangelist's intent in the surface structure.²¹⁶ Rather, Luz is focused on the depth of the structure, its function in the overall plot, which he describes as "a second level of meaning in the Jesus narrative, which surpasses its own past in approaching the reader."²¹⁷ For Luz, the particular arrangement of the miracles and interspersed narratives as they are redacted and repositioned from their sources show that the evangelist is focused on the way in which this arrangement works in the developing tensions of the gospel he is preparing. Therefore, a pause to examine exactly where he redacted material and the relation of the miracles to each other obstructs the intent of the evangelist and creates a side conversation, which is rather superficial when compared to the larger question of the manner in which Matthew 8-9 serves the gospel agenda as a whole. The point of the evangelist with regard to Matthew 8-9 is not in the grouping of the miracles, but rather the effective conclusion of Matthew 9:33b-34 where the two groups, the crowds and the Pharisees, show their response to Jesus and set up the tensions of the gospel.²¹⁸ This tension seen through the whole Gospel is resolved at last when Israel's rejection leads to the opening out of the gospel to the whole world. Luz understands the Gospel of Matthew as the founding story of the church through the great tension of opposition and the function of Matthew 8-9 is to describe the beginning of

²¹⁵ Ibid., 228. This interpretation is similar to Burger's "foundation legend of the Church."

²¹⁶ Luz says that "the surface structure is very confusing." See his article, Luz, "Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9," 155.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 156.

²¹⁸ Luz's notion of tension is more developed and clearly expressed than that of Combrink.

tension as the first stage of Complication in the depth structure.

Luz's insistence on depth analysis and his resistance to surface structure carry certain liabilities for his overall interpretation of the Matthean gospel. One cannot simply dismiss the decision of Matthew to reorder sources and to redact them as unimportant to the evangelist's serious theological intent. With respect to his treatment of Matthew 8-9, we must note that his appraisal of its function is seriously incomplete. It is not likely that the evangelist collected the nine miracle stories in Matthew 8-9 only for the purpose of showing the Matthean community's present experience of miracles or to explain the history of the church establishment. The collection could have been directly drawn from Mark, following that evangelist's order of presentation, but they are mixed, reordered, and he has included a miracle story from Q as well. Moreover, Matthew has chosen to leave some miracle stories out of the collection although they were more proximate to those in Mark he did choose. All of this points to authorial intent beyond illustrating the division of opinion about them as seen at the conclusion of the chapter. It is doubtful if we can represent the full intent of the evangelist by focusing on a second level of meaning without caring to establish the first level. Sole and whole dependence on the second level of meaning leaves the gospel bereft of the evangelist's more sophisticated intentions beyond the basic plot.

If, however, we simply critique the actual theory of Luz's application of the three divisions, we recall that he solved Combrink's model, where his isolation of Matthew 1-4 as setting did not create a problem that the death and Resurrection of Jesus could be seen to resolve. So Luz suggested that Matthew 5-7 should belong to the stage

of Orientation not to the stage of Complication. Because he could not see any tension in Matthew 5-7, he thought that the commandments of Jesus belonged to Orientation, and it became the goal of the Gospel to be achieved in the section of Resolution, i.e., in Matthew 28:20. One problem with this is that in his emphasis on the discourse in Matthew 5-7 he neglected the roles of other discourses in Matthew: the parables of the heavenly kingdom, (Matt 13) and the final judgment (Matt 24). We should ask why the evangelist expanded not only the discourse of Matthew 5-7 but also other discourses in the Gospel of Matthew. A second problem is that with his separation of Matthew 5-7 into the "Orientation," he misses the otherwise unanimous recognition of the linkage between Matthew 5-7 as Jesus' authority in word followed by his authority in deed in Matthew 8-9, and the inclusion of Matthew 9:35 with Matt 4:23-24. Because Luz focused solely on the tension of the plot, he missed the linkages immediately apparent in the surface structure deliberately created by Matthew and, as a result, his interpretation is less than persuasive.

Conclusion

These approaches reveal the limitations of applying modern literary theories to ancient texts when such theories of literary composition were not yet recognized or practiced. Thus, there can be no expectation that the author of the gospel understood the rubrics of a narrative along modern lines. In fact, the Gospel of Matthew is not set up in such a way as to easily fulfill the Setting, Complication, and Resolution phases except in the most elemental way that one finds in any story. The difficulties appeared immediately in trying to discover a clear "setting," where scholars differ in identifying

where the lines of division occur. Similarly there are scholarly troubles with establishing what the “Resolution” addresses. Meanwhile, the carefully crafted speeches and redacted blocks of narratives with their own important contribution to the gospel are left unexplored. Of importance for this dissertation, Matthew 8-9 suffers from neglect of Matthean redaction and decision making that explains the text’s composition. Rather, this section is judged by its function as the partner to Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 5-7 or as a separate section addressing the beginning of gospel tension, as we have seen. Overall, the general concern addressed by these studies was an understanding of Matthew’s ecclesiology rather than his Christology since each tried to show opposition to the Church rather than checking to see if the evangelist’s redaction sought also to bring a focus on Christology.

Conclusion of Narrative Approaches

In an effort to view the gospel as a whole, rather than as a set of themes, scholars who explore narrative address the macrostructure or the “deep structure” to uncover the evangelist’s intent. What we have seen is that the grand sweep of this approach assesses the function of Matthew 8-9 in the overall gospel, but not the particular organization that Matthew created with his choice and placement of pericopae in Matthew 8-9. These approaches are ill equipped, then, to probe the question of the structure Matthew created for these two chapters. The general weakness of narrative approaches, however, has been recognized by other scholars who seek to use literary techniques to uncover Matthew’s intent.

New Approaches through Literary Techniques

Thematic approaches and narrative approaches can supplement each other's weaknesses to some degree, but their fundamental difference in representing the role of Matthew 8-9 exposes their actual divergence—either approach has the capability to address the structure of Matthew 8-9 in sufficient detail. Whereas the thematic approaches emphasize each pericope's theme, the narrative approaches mainly focus on the structure of the Gospel as a whole. Neither approach pays enough attention to the actual structure of Matthew 8-9. New approaches using literary techniques try to provide what these two different approaches cannot give, they provide different and fresh viewpoints, in particular the two most prominent: chiastic approaches and triadic approaches.

Chiastic Approaches

Ever since Nils W. Lund's several articles on the structure of chiasm in the 1930s,²¹⁹ chiasm has become one of the popular tools in analyzing ancient texts. Before Lund, some scholars also mentioned and used chiasm,²²⁰ but it is hard to say that chiastic approaches had been done systematically prior to Lund's publication. Afterwards, many

²¹⁹ Nils Wilhelm Lund, "The Presence of Chiasmus in the Old Testament," in *AJSLL* 46 (1930), 104-126; idem, "The Presence of Chiasmus in the New Testament," in *JR* 10 (1930), 74-93; idem, "The Influence of Chiasmus upon the Structure of the Gospels," in *ATR* 13 (1931), 27-48; idem, "The Influence of Chiasmus upon the Structure of the Gospel according to Matthew," in *ATR* 13-4 (1931), 405-433; idem, "The Literary Structure of Paul's Hymn to Love," in *JBL* 10 (1933), 266-276; idem, "Chiasmus in the Psalms," in *AJSLL* 49 (1933), 281-312.

²²⁰ For example, W. C. Allen, "The Dependence of St. Matthew 1-13 upon St. Mark," in *ExpTim* 11 (1899-1900), 279-284; J. C. Hawkins, "The Arrangement of Materials in St. Matthew 8-9 [I]," in *ExpTim* 12 (1900-01), 471-474; idem, "The Arrangement of Materials in St. Matthew 8-9 [II]," in *ExpTim* 13 (1901-1902), 20-25. T. F. Glasson finds chiasm of Matthew 7:6 even in John Wesley of 18th century, Tindale (1539) and Wycliff (1380). See his article, "Chiasmus in St. Matthew vii. 6," in *ExpTim* 68 (1957), 302.

scholars applied this method to the interpretation of the Bible, both to the Old and New Testaments. The Gospel of Matthew, therefore, has also been studied from the viewpoint of chiasm by some scholars.

In the study of Matthew, chiasm is closely related to the theory of narrative-discourse alternation. That is, scholars who support a chiastic explanation of the structure in the Gospel of Matthew also generally adopt the observation of narrative-discourse alternation in many cases.

Nils W. Lund

Lund finds a chiastic arrangement in the whole Gospel of Matthew as well as on the small scale, including words, lines and paragraphs.²²¹

- A. 1:1-17 (Jesus is the Son of Abraham and Son of David)
- B. 1:18-2:23 (Jesus' coming and his "star" [sign])
- C. 3:1-17 (The Jewish notion and its relation to the "beloved Son")
- D. 4:1-11 (Three challenges in the form of temptations)
- E. 4:12-11:6 (Sayings and Doings of Jesus)
- E'. 11:7-14:12 (Doings and Sayings of Jesus)
- D'. 14:13-20:28 (Three great affirmations by means of groups of passages)
- C'. 20:29-23:39 (The Jewish nation and its leaders, and their relation to Jesus)
- B'. 24:1-25:46 (Jesus' coming and his "sign")
- A'. 26:1-28:20 (Jesus is shown in various ways to be the king of Israel)

This structure has proved to be unpersuasive to scholars and his analysis is rarely quoted or used in the study of the Gospel of Matthew. One can see at a glance that it is unbalanced. For example, D (4:1-11) is a short pericope of the Temptation while its parallel D' (14:13-20:28) consists of six chapters. Again, Lund finds parallelism in the

²²¹ N. W. Lund, "The Influence of Chiasmus upon the Structure of the Gospel According to Matthew," in *ATR* 13 (1931), 408-409.

first temptation (4:1-4) and in Jesus' making the bread (14:13-15:39),²²² but he cannot account for the many different episodes that exist in 14:13-15:39, such as Jesus' walking on the water (14:22-36) and the faith of the Canaanite woman (15:21-28). It is a forced connection to link the whole section of 14:13-15:39 to the first temptation of Jesus as a parallel. Notice that the second and third temptations also display a forced parallel.

Lund thinks that the central parallel E and E' (4:12-14:12; The Sayings and Doings of Jesus) is the turning point of the Gospel of Matthew according to his laws of chiasmic structure.²²³ According to Lund, this section answers questions about Jesus' personality in a chiasmic arrangement contrasting "lights and shadows in the total picture of Jesus."²²⁴ But this section is the beginning stage of Jesus' public ministry so it is hard to say that this section is the turning point and the main theme of the Gospel of Matthew. His analysis of the central parallel D is as follows:²²⁵

- A: 4:12-24 (Introduction)
- B: 4:25-8:1 (The Sayings of Jesus)
- C: 8:2-17 (A Central Summary)
- B': 8:19-9:34 (The Doings of Jesus)
- A: 9:35-11:6 (Conclusion)

While we can admire Lund's great effort to analyze the whole Gospel from the viewpoint of chiasm, his proposed structure demands too much special pleading to be convincing. What is especially interesting in Lund's analysis of Matthew 8-9 is that 8:2-17 is the central summary of parallel E. Contrary to the general notion that this section

²²² Ibid., 409.

²²³ Ibid., 410. According to Lund, the center is always the turning point. See his dissertation, *Chiasmus in the New Testament* (Chicago of University, 1941), 40-41.

²²⁴ Lund, "Chiasmus and Matthew," 423.

²²⁵ Ibid., 415.

consists of the first group of three miracles, Lund thinks that this central summary is related to the threefold statement of teaching, preaching, and healing in the general summaries of 4:23-24 and 9:35-10:1 in that Jesus heals all sorts of diseases (leprosy; palsy; fever) in all sorts of places (mountain; city; home) and by all sorts of methods (touch and word; word without touch; touch without word).²²⁶ Therefore, according to Lund's analysis, the section of "the Doings of Jesus" is limited to 8:19-9:34. However, the gospel does not indicate any intent to separate the first three miracle stories from the second and third three miracle stories, and thus, Lund's main concern to uncover chiasmic structures explains his inability to see a relationship among the three groups of three miracle stories. That is, his main concern was to find chiasmic structures so that he overlooked the relationship of the three miracle stories.

Lund also finds chiasm in the section entitled "the Doings of Jesus" (8:19-9:34):²²⁷

- A: 8:19-22 (A believing scribe and another disciple)
- B: 8:23-27 (The tempest)
- C: 8:28-34 (Two possessed men)
- D: 9:1-8 (A palsied man)
- E: 9:9-13 (Pharisees)
- E': 9:14-17 (John's disciples)
- D': 9:18-26 (Jairus' daughter)
- C': 9: 27-31 (Two blind men)
- B': 9:32-33 (The dumb man)
- A': 9:34 (Unbelieving Pharisees)

According to Lund's analysis, the key message of "the Doings of Jesus" is the challenges of Pharisees and John's disciples about eating and fasting respectively. Although these

²²⁶ Ibid., 415.

²²⁷ Ibid., 415.

challenges have no direct relationship to Jesus' miracles, Lund focuses only on the parallels themselves. Of course, the parallels do not depend on the context but on the similarities of words, phrases, background, etc. For example, parallel AA' (8:19-22; 9:34) has no contextual similarities, Matthew 8:19-22 discusses the cost of following Jesus and 9:34 mentions the Pharisees' negative description of Jesus' power as coming from the prince of the demons. But Lund's concern is the contrast between "believing" and "unbelieving" as the source of parallelism. It is problematic, however, to categorize 8:19-22 as "believing" because the teacher of the law was rejected by Jesus. It is also unnatural to divide 9:33 and 9:34 as separate parallels since 9:33 is the crowd's positive response to Jesus' miracle while 9:34 is the Pharisees' negative response.

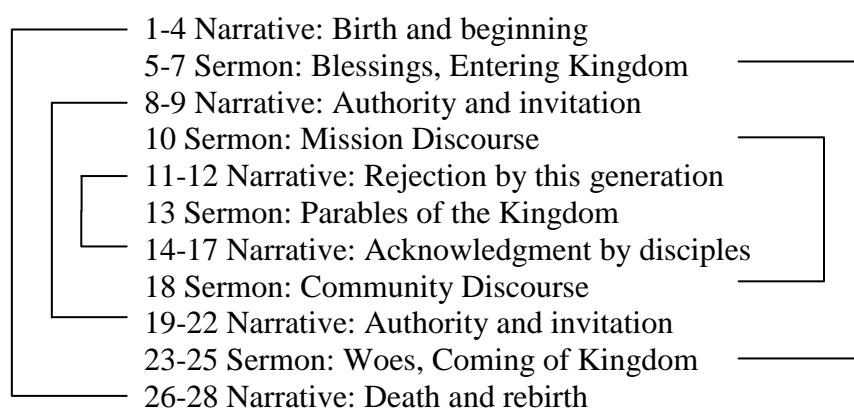
Lund's analysis of the structure of the Gospel of Matthew from the viewpoint of chiasm shows unbalance between the context and the chiastic form. While Lund tried to demonstrate the formal unity of the Gospel of Matthew, this formal unity does not reflect the context and therefore does not explain the author's intention persuasively. His approach is similar to topical approaches in that it neglects the story line and the flow of the context. His chiastic analysis is too speculative and so incapable of finding the author's intention. While he insists that the church knew and used chiasm as a cultural heritage (423),²²⁸ he can offer no proof of this and it is also doubtful that the early church used this method in such a complex way as Lund's analysis of the Gospel of Matthew would suggest. All told, Lund's analysis is very artificial and has therefore been bypassed by scholars in the study of the Gospel of Matthew.

²²⁸ Ibid., 423

C. H. Lohr

Contrary to Lund who ignores the storyline and context of the Gospel of Matthew, Lohr focuses on the repetition of narrative-discourse. He does not think that the Gospel is composed of five books, as Bacon did; instead, he sees the symmetrical structure (chiastic structure) through the alteration of narrative-discourse. He thinks that this method is fundamental in analyzing the Gospel of Matthew. His analysis of the structure of Matthew is as follows:²²⁹

Figure 1. Lohr's Structure of the Gospel of Matthew



Lohr observes the balance of the five discourses as an intended chiasm. Matthew 5-7 and Matthew 23-25 make a parallel of blessings and woes, or entering the Kingdom and the coming of the Kingdom respectively.²³⁰ Matthew 10 and 18 make a parallel in the sending out of the Apostles and the receiving of the little ones.²³¹ The discourse of

²²⁹ C. H. Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew," in *CBQ* 23 (1961), 427.

²³⁰ It is doubtful if the main theme of Matthew 5-7 is 'blessing' or 'entering the kingdom' and if the main theme of Matthew 23-25 is 'curse' or 'coming of the kingdom.' Lund's analysis gives the impression that his themes were made for the sake of parallelism, many scholars who support chiasm make the same mistake.

Matthew 13 is located at the center of the structure and describes the Kingdom's character as the turning point of the Gospel.²³² The six narratives, according to Lohr, also show balances between each chiastic parallel.²³³ For example, Matthew 8-9 and Matthew 19-22 are claimed to hold "interlocking echoes" in them. Matthew 8:11 and 22:32 mention "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" and 8:12 and 22:13 say, "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." He also finds the repeated parallels of the two blind men's cure in 9:27-31 and 20:29-34. The frequent occurrences of some key words such as "follow" (8:19, 22; 9:9; 19:21, 27, 28), "authority" (8:9; 9:6, 8; 21:23, 24, 27) also show a symmetrical parallel between Matthew 8-9 and Matthew 19-22.²³⁴ Here we can observe that Lohr has difficulty in demonstrating parallel themes in the narratives of Matthew 8-9 and 19-22. While he could find some thematic parallels in the five discourses through some repeated key words, it was not easy for him to find chiastic parallels in the narratives. This is why Lohr's explanation of the narratives does not match well with the flow of the story, the same problem we noted with Lund. His analysis of the narratives from the viewpoint of chiasm is artificial despite a more developed model of chiasm than Lund.

Lohr also finds a symmetrical structure in the section Matthew 8-9. He acknowledges the structure of 3+2+3+2+3, where three sets of three miracle stories are

²³¹ The same tendency noted in footnote 12 can be observed here again. While the theme of Matthew 10 is clearly about 'sending out of the apostles,' it is hard to say that the theme of Matthew 18 is 'receiving of the little ones.'

²³² This explanation is better than that of Lund, but it is also doubtful if Matthew 13 plays the role of a turning point in the story of the Gospel of Matthew.

²³³ Ibid., 427-30.

²³⁴ Ibid., 428-29.

interpolated with two stories of discipleship. Here he sees a chiastic structure in the alternation of miracle stories and discipleship stories. While he does not concretely analyze the structures and themes of each chiastic parallel in Matthew 8-9, Lohr only points out that Jesus is called by the title “Son of God” in the central miracle of these central miracle stories. This must mean that the theme or key word in Matthew 8-9 is related to the title “Son of God.” The difficulty is the same as that with Kingsbury’s interpretation already discussed above. Matthew 8-9 is related to Jesus’ authority in deeds, but the text itself does not demonstrate any explicit emphasis on Jesus as “Son of God.”

Lohr’s analysis has the same problem as those analyses that focus on the repetition of narrative-discourse do. While he could escape the problem of emphasizing Jesus’ sayings rather than the story itself, his main concern with chiastic analysis was not successful in showing persuasively parallel concepts between parallels, especially between the narrative parallels. His understanding of the relationship between Matthew 5-7 and Matthew 8-9 is also hard to accept. According to his analysis, they have little relationship as “blessing, entering the kingdom” and “authority and invitation” respectively, but Matthew 5-7 and Matthew 8-9 are generally thought to describe Jesus’ authority in word and deed as a pair. This is the serious limitation in this approach, chiasm generally neglects the context and the story line, and this negligence results in an unacceptable conclusion by focusing on the central parallel. Lohr insists that “Parable of the Kingdom” is the main message of the Gospel of Matthew and “Son of God” is the key word of Matthew 8-9, but this is simply not true.

Peter F. Ellis

Peter F. Ellis, following Lohr, observes the same chiastic pattern in the alternation of narratives and discourses.²³⁵

Sermon	(f) ch 13 (f')	
Narratives	ch 11-12 (e)	(e') ch 14-17
Sermons	ch 10 (d)	(d') ch 18
Narratives	ch 8-9 (c)	(c') ch 19-22
Sermons	ch 5-7 (b)	(b') ch 23-25
Narratives	ch 1-4 (a)	(a') ch 26-28

Ellis tries to overcome the weak points of the chiastic structures of Lund and Lohr by taking the story line into account in his structure of Matthew. He finds seven discourses, adding two minor discourses of Matthew 3:8-12 and Matthew 28:18-20 to the five major discourses of Bacon.²³⁶ These two minor discourses, especially the latter as the final discourse in the Gospel of Matthew, play important roles in the structure of Matthew. According to Ellis, this discourse exchanges the static (i.e., story-less and undramatic) structure of Bacon and Lohr for a progressive development of the story line.

To Ellis, Matthew 28:18-20 is the key to the gospel because “the action and the ideas progress steadily to the climactic missionary mandate of Mt 28:18-20.”²³⁷ According to him, the movement consists of two stages: 1) the authority of Jesus established in chapters 1-9, 2) the authority of the Apostles established in chapters 10-

²³⁵ Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1974), 12.

²³⁶ Ellis accepts Bacon’s explanation about the role of narratives and discourses in the Gospel of Matthew. He sees the narratives are needed to prepare the discourses. See his book, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message*, 17.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 24.

28:18a.²³⁸ At the height of this progress we find 28:18b-20, in which “endowed with all authority, Jesus authorizes his Apostles to teach to all nations what he has taught them.”²³⁹ To Ellis, therefore, Matthew 28:18-20 is the main theme of the Gospel as well as the final destiny of the movement. Of course 28:18-20 is not a sudden mandate of Jesus to his Apostles, according to Ellis, this final discourse is a recapitulation of Matthew’s concentric circle themes. Ellis finds ten concentric-circle themes in 28:18-20: (1) the authority of Jesus, (2) the authority of the Apostles, (3) the ecclesial mission of the Apostles, (4) Scope of the apostolic mission, (5) baptism, (6) teaching, (7) to observe what Jesus commands, (8) observing all the commandments, (9) assurance of Jesus’ assistance, (10) the end-time judgment.²⁴⁰ These themes occur again and again in the Gospel as the concentric-circle themes²⁴¹ and are recapitulated as the key to the Gospel in the final discourse of Jesus.

Ellis’ understanding of the whole structure is similar to that of Bacon in that it emphasizes the importance of discourses in the Gospel of Matthew. While he tries to show the progress of the story by dividing the Gospel into two stages, the fact is that this analysis does not coincide with his own proposed chiastic structure. “Parables on the Kingdom” as the turning point and the key message of the Gospel in a chiastic structure is neglected in the development of the story. This means that the author imbedded two

²³⁸ Ibid., 24-25.

²³⁹ Ibid., 25.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 20-22.

²⁴¹ The literary technique of concentric-circle presentation means “an author’s returning at regular intervals to the same fundamental themes under different forms, from different aspects, and with additional light on matters of detail.” See his book, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message*, 19.

different structures (i.e., two progress stages of authorities of Jesus and his Apostles and a chiastic structure focusing on the Parables on the Kingdom in chapter 13) in a single book. This double structure is less than persuasive and he seems to fail in “reaching the mind of Matthew.”

The weak point of his chiastic structure, like Lund and Lohr’s analyses, is that the links between the parallels are weak. The frequently quoted problem of this structure is that in the parallel between the miracle chapters of Matthew 8-9 and various narratives in chapters 19-22 it is hard to find any common factor. Ellis finds a different chiastic pattern within the structure of Matthew 8-9 instead of the symmetrical structure. While Lohr observes a symmetrical structure of 3+2+3+2+3 without any explanation about their relationship,²⁴² Ellis analyzes Matthew 8-9 with the semi-chiastic structure of repeating the keywords of “author-power” and “follow.”²⁴³

(a) 8:1-17 Three miracle stories

(b) 8:18-27 Three discipleship stories

(a.1) 8:28-9:8 Two miracle stories

(b.1) 9:9-18 Three discipleship stories

(a.2) 9:20-34 Four miracle stories

9:35-37 Conclusion of the narrative

However, Ellis; analysis of Matthew 8-9 is peculiar in several way; for example,

²⁴² This seems to come from the difficulty of finding any common factors between each parallel. While Lohr thinks ‘Son of God’ is the key word of Matthew 8-9, he could not find any common character of each of the three miracle groups.

²⁴³ Ibid., 42.

8:23-27 is classed as one of three discipleship stories rather than a miracle story.²⁴⁴ The main reason for this is the keyword “follow” in 8:23 as also in 8:19. His analysis depends on a technique of concentric-circle presentation. Here keywords play an important role, and Ellis pays attention to keywords more than to contexts. In other words, by focusing on the keyword “follow” in 8:23 rather than on Jesus’ miracle of calming the sea he classified 8:23-27 as a discipleship story. This tendency of paying attention to the keywords rather than to the context is shown also in b.1) “three discipleship stories.” Ellis divides 9:9-13 into two different disciple stories: 1) the call to Matthew to “follow me” (9:9), 2) Pharisees, disciples, and Jesus at table (9:10-13). According to Ellis, 9:9 is an independent discipleship story because the keyword “follow” is used in the call of Matthew while the following story of 9:10-13 has no relationship with “follow” concept. In assessing this proposal, it must be observed that it is doubtful if a keyword can become the main theme for the evangelist if it does not reflect the context he has provided. More seriously, it is doubtful if the keyword chosen can therefore represent the evangelist if it conflicts with the context. As will be noted, this tendency of neglecting the context is the common problem of chiastic analyses and narrative-discourse theories.

It is also doubtful if Ellis’ analysis of Matthew 8-9 can be called chiastic. The reason Ellis cannot insist on a perfect chiastic structure of ABCB’A’ instead of quasi-chiastic structure of a) b) a.1) b.1) a.2) seems to be related to chapters 19-22. He confesses that the relationship between chapters 19-22 and 23-25 is not easy to establish

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 42.

as a narrative-discourse pair,²⁴⁵ nor is it easy to establish the relationship between chapters 8-9 and 19-22 as a chiastic parallel. While he does not explain the relationship between chapters 8-9 and chapters 19-22 as a chiastic parallel,²⁴⁶ Ellis seems to find one similarity in that both use quasi-chiastic structures.²⁴⁷

a) 19:1-30 (four questions)

b) 20:1-22:14 (true versus pseudo-Israel)

a.1) 22:15-46 (four questions)

It is clear why he cannot call his structure as chiasm. He says instead, “The material in chapters 19-22 is chiasmically arranged.” He seems to find similarity in the “chiasmical arrangement” of material, but his chiastic analysis of cc. 8-9 and 19-22 is less than persuasive. His chiastic structure shows only that it is hard to find the main theme in his analysis. While Ellis uses “authority” as the keyword of both sections, the contents of each parallel are quite different. If the authority of Matthew 8-9 is about miraculous deeds, the authority of Matthew 19-22 is about Jesus’ authoritative words. “Discipleship” is another keyword for Ellis, but discipleship cannot become the keyword of Matthew 8-9. In sum, Ellis’ chiastic analysis does not explain the intention of Matthew as well as he intended at the beginning.

Conclusion

The chiasm structure requires, it seems, negligence of the storyline and, therefore,

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 72.

²⁴⁶ Because Ellis thinks that each narrative prepares for the following discourse, it is not expected for him to find any common factor between each chiastic parallel. It is also unclear why he calls his ABA’B’A” structure “chiastic.” In this sense, his analysis is very close to narrative-discourse theory rather than to chiastic understanding.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 73-74

unbalance between the context and the formal structure. As was seen, the first goal of this approach is finding keywords within the chiasmic parallel, keywords which do not reflect the context. At first glance, chiasm may look systematic, but it proves ineffectual to represent the author's intention. Arguments for the preeminence of chiasm as an early Christian method of organizing material must be supported by clear examples of its use in ways that coordinate with the context. This review illustrates that chiasmic analyses performed on the Gospel of Matthew as a whole, and even in part, prove to be artificial and thus the practical usefulness of this method is doubtful.

Triadic Approaches

It has been frequently remarked that the Gospel of Matthew is full of "threeness."²⁴⁸ While some numbers such as two, four, and seven are also used in some cases, 'threeness' is used profusely in the Gospel of Matthew. Therefore, it is not strange to observe that some scholars have focused on the usage of the number three in analyzing the structure of the Gospel of Matthew. While this triadic approach is not dominant in the study of the Gospel of Matthew, it deserves some attention.

Willoughby C. Allen

Among those early scholars who are interested in the triadic structure of the Gospel of Matthew is Willoughby C. Allen. As one of the three prominent editing methods characteristic of the Gospel of Matthew, he lists "the arrangement of incidents or sayings into numerical groups."²⁴⁹ Among those numerical groups, threeness is salient

²⁴⁸ Summary of this approach can be seen in Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew's Trilogy of Parables: The Nation, the Nations and the Reader in Matthew 21:28-22:14* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33-39. See also W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Matthew 1-7* (London: T&T Clark, 1988), 62.

and can be observed all over the Gospel. In Matthew 8-9 Allen observes three groups of three miracles of healing (8:1-15), three miracles of power (8:23-9:8), and three miracles of restoration (9:18-34), but he does not explain the relationship between those three groups. In addition, he has trouble in explaining why the two discipleship stories in 8:19-22 are placed in the present section.²⁵⁰ In sum, he is one of the earliest scholars who paid attention to threeness in the Gospel of Matthew, but his attention was not enough to reveal a systematic understanding.

W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann

W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann also observe the use of numbers in the Gospel of Matthew as a mnemonic device.²⁵¹ The numbers two, three, five and seven were frequently used as mnemonics in Jewish rabbinical writings and Proverbs because they were easy to recall. According to them, the reason we can see many examples of threeness in the Gospel of Matthew is that Matthew faithfully followed the mnemonic device according to the oral tradition of the Matthean community. In understanding Matthew 8-9, Albright and Mann show the same interpretation. While they also observe three miracle groups similar to Allen, they explain this collection of three cycles of three miracle stories as a mnemonic device to make memorizing of oral tradition easier.²⁵² However, this theory is speculative. It is doubtful if Mark and Luke neglected the oral

²⁴⁹ Willoughby C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew*. ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), lxv. See also his article, "The dependence of St. Matthew 1-13 upon St. Mark," in *ExpTim* (1899-1900), 284.

²⁵⁰ Allen, *A Commentary on Matthew*, 81.

²⁵¹ W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), LVII-LVIII.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 97.

tradition of using threeness as a mnemonic device as we can find in the comparison of the Synoptic gospels. It seems more persuasive to note that Matthew himself intended this linkage and rearranged the Markan miracle stories into three groups. The explanation of Albright and Mann, while seeming convincing at first, cannot explain why the earliest gospels do not use such a technique when so many of the forms were still loose and unconnected in any gospel. Their theory relies too much on the theory of mnemonic devices.

Other Scholars

Among many other scholars who also notice the use of three in the Gospel of Matthew are J. Moffat,²⁵³ C. H. Lohr,²⁵⁴ P. F. Ellis,²⁵⁵ U. Luz,²⁵⁶ W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison,²⁵⁷ E. Wainwright,²⁵⁸ J. Meier.²⁵⁹ Most of them also accept the 3+2+3+2+3 structure of Matthew 8-9. However, the problem is that there has been no scholar who tried to explain systematically the triadic structure of Matthew 8-9 until Davies and Allison. For example, Elaine Wainwright divides the miracle stories of Matthew 8-9 into

²⁵³ James Moffat, *An Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1918), 257.

²⁵⁴ C. H. Lohr, "Oral Techniques in the Gospel of Matthew," in *CBQ* 23 (1961), 431.

²⁵⁵ Peter F. Ellis, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1974), 42.

²⁵⁶ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary*, trans. James E. Crouch (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 5-6.

²⁵⁷ W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *Matthew 1-7* (London: T&T Clark, 1988), 61-72; D. C. Allison, "The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount," in *JBL* 106 (1987), 423-45.

²⁵⁸ Elaine Mary Wainwright, *Towards A Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 80-82.

²⁵⁹ John P. Meier, *Matthew* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1980), 80.

three groups (8:1-15; 8:23-9:8; 9:18-34) with two buffer pericopae (8:16-22; 9:9-17).²⁶⁰

However, because her explanation is focused on the feministic interpretation of 8:14-15 and 9:18-26, it is hard to understand how she views the role of Matthew 8-9 in the gospel entire. John Meier also understands Matthew 8-9 as having the same structure,²⁶¹ but he too fails to explain the relationship of the three groups of the miracle stories along with the two buffer pericopae.

Davies and Allison

Davies and Allison's point of departure is Matthew's love of triad, which they regard as the key to the structure of the Gospel of Matthew.²⁶² First, they find triadic structures in the five discourses of the Gospel. While Allison previously analyzed the Sermon on the Mount of Matthew 5-7 from the viewpoint of triad,²⁶³ Davies and Allison together observe that this triadic structure is not limited to the Sermon on the Mount but extends to all five discourses: Matthew 5-7, 10, 13, 18, 24-25.²⁶⁴ Then they expand their search for triadic structures into the narrative material of the Gospel and observe triadic structures in the narrative material of Matthew 1-12 as follows:²⁶⁵

- I. Early History (1:18-4:22)
 - a. The conception and infancy of Jesus (1:18-25)
 - b. John the Baptist and Jesus (3:1-17)

²⁶⁰ Wainwright, *Towards A Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel According to Matthew*. Beihefte zur ZNW 60 (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 80-82.

²⁶¹ Meier, *Matthew*, 80.

²⁶² Davies & Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 3.

²⁶³ Allison, "The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount," 423-445.

²⁶⁴ Davies & Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 62-66.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

- c. The Beginning of Jesus' ministry (4:1-22)
- II. A cycle of nine miracle stories (8:1-9:34)
 - a. Three miracles (8:1-15)
 - b. Three more miracles, on and around the sea (8:23-9:8)
 - c. Three more miracles (9:18-34)
- III. Confrontation with 'this generation' (11:2-12:50)
 - a. John, Jesus, and 'this generation' (11:2-30)
 - b. The ministry of mercy (12:1-21)
 - c. On discernment (12:22-50)

Although Davies and Allison omit 1:1 (the book's title) and 1:2-17 (the genealogy)²⁶⁶ from the narrative material, it can be said that Matthew 1-12 is fully composed of triadic structures. After observing this beautifully organized triadic structure in Matthew 1-12, Davies and Allison point out two things. First, Matthew's predilection for the triad cannot be denied any more as it is found in the five discourses and the narrative material of Matthew 1-12. Davies and Allison explain the reason for the author's predilection for threes as a popular joining device as seen in the examples of Simeon the Just,²⁶⁷ Jesus' fondness of threefold structures,²⁶⁸ Mark's threefold structures.²⁶⁹ Second, they argue that the triadic structure cannot be observed in the narrative material after Matthew 12 because, Davies and Allison explain, Matthew used different sources than the Gospel of Mark when he wrote the narrative material of Matthew 1-12 and the five discourses: "when Matthew composed on his own (as in 1-12 and the major discourses), he

²⁶⁶ While Davies and Allison classify this genealogy as not belonging to the narrative, it seems correct to see this as a part of a narrative. This genealogy is also composed of a triadic structure.

²⁶⁷ *m. 'Abot* 1.2.

²⁶⁸ C. L. Mitton, "Threefoldness in the Teaching of Jesus," in *ExpTim* 75 (1964), 228-30.

²⁶⁹ F. Neirynck, "ΑΠΟ ΤΟΤΕ ΗΡΞΑΤΟ And The Structure of Matthew," in *Evangelica*, ed. F. Van Segbroeck (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1982), 546-61.

composes in triads; when he follows Mark (as he does from 14:1 on and in 13:1-23 and 24:1-36), the triads disappear.”²⁷⁰

It is evident that Davies and Allison’s explanation of the triadic structures of Matthew 1-12 is more systematic than any of the previous studies. They reviewed the whole Gospel from the viewpoint of triad and made two observations. While we can accept their first observation, that Matthew’s predilection for the triadic structure is not deniable, their second observation that we cannot find any threes after Ch 12 is not acceptable. Some studies have shown triadic structures outside Matthew 1-12. For example, J. P. Heil found a triadic structure in Matthew 26-28, even though it was accidental. According to Heil, Matthew 26-28 consists of “three main sections...each composed of nine scenes that function together as a dynamic progression.”²⁷¹

- I. Jesus prepares for and accepts his death (26:1-56)
 - a. Jesus anticipates his death by Jewish leaders (26:1-16)
 - b. Jesus prepares the disciples for his death (26:17-29)
 - c. Jesus accepts death through prayer (26:30-56)
- II. The innocent Jesus dies as true king and Son of God (26:57-27:54)
 - a. Jesus admits his divine Sonship (26:57-75)
 - b. The innocent Jesus admits his kingship (27:1-14)
 - c. Jesus dies as God’s innocent, royal Son (27:15-54)
- III. The authority of the Risen Jesus prevails through witnesses of his death, burial, and resurrection (27:55-28:20)
 - a. Women followers witness Jesus’ death and burial (27:55-61)
 - b. Jewish leaders try to thwart Jesus’ resurrection (27:62-28:4)
 - c. The authority of the risen Jesus prevails (28:5-20)

As we can observe in Heil’s analysis, Matthew 26-28 also consists of triadic structures.

²⁷⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 70.

²⁷¹ Paul J. Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus: A Narrative-Critical Reading of Matthew 26-28* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 2.

The triple triadic structure shows the progressive development of the story of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Another example is Tyler J. VanderWeele (2008) who also observes triadic structures in Matthew 21-22. He supports C. H. Lohr's chiastic structure with narrative-discourse alternation. Because the weakest point of Lohr's understanding was the link between the parallel chapters of Matthew 8-9 and 19-22, VanderWeele seeks to find some common factors between them. As a result, he observes that Matthew 21-22 consists of "three sets of three once again."²⁷²

21:1-21:27 Three symbolic actions

- a. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem
- b. The cleansing of the temple
- c. The cursing of the fig tree

21:28-22:14 Three parables

- a. The parable of the two sons
- b. The parable of the landowner
- c. The parable of the marriage feast

22:15-22: Three questions

- a. The Pharisees' question concerning paying taxes to Caesar
- b. The Sadducees' question concerning marriage and the resurrection
- c. The lawyer's question concerning the greatest commandment

While it is regretful that VanderWeele does not consider Matthew 19-20 as a part of parallel 19-22, the fact is that Matthew 21-22 also has triadic structures.

Therefore, it is precarious to conclude that the triadic structure disappears in the narrative material after Matthew 12. If Heil's and VanderWeele's analyses are correct, we can say that Matthew's predilection for triadic structures is not limited only to Matthew 1-12, but possibly extends to the following sections, we lack only sufficient

²⁷² T. J. VanderWeele, "Some Observations concerning the Chiastic Structure of the Gospel of Matthew," in *JTS* 59 (2008), 671.

research in this area. As a result, it is necessary to reexamine the whole Gospel of Matthew from the viewpoint of triad.

The most serious problem with Davies and Allison's approach to the triadic structure of Matthew is that they do not explain why the author overwhelmingly used the triadic structure. In other words, it is not enough to say that triadic arrangement was a popular method of editing during the time of Matthew and that the author had a predilection for this method. It should be explained why he filled his Gospel with threes and what the author concretely wanted to earn by using threes. But Davies and Allison remain silent about the purpose of using threes. As Stewart-Sykes comments, any literary explanation should be followed by a theological explanation if it is to be persuasive: "If a redactional justification is to be sought for Matthew's re-arrangement of this material then a theological explanation is surely preferable to one which is simply "architectural."²⁷³ If Davies and Allison cannot give a theological explanation for the triadic structure, their understanding of the structure is not complete and, therefore, inadequate. In the end, Davies and Allison follow a thematic approach in the concrete interpretation of each triadic unit. Even though they proclaimed that "the key to unlocking the structure cannot be found in topical interests (Christology, Discipleship, and Faith),"²⁷⁴ they could not observe theological themes dominating the triadic structures along with narrative-discourse alternations. In other words, their analysis of the structure of Matthew through the triadic literary technique does not play a critical role in

²⁷³ Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "Matthew's Miracle Chapters: From Composition to Narrative and Back Again," in *SB* 25 (1995), 56-57.

²⁷⁴ Davis & Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 3-4.

understanding the author's intention of collecting three triadic units in Matthew. Thus, Davies and Allison's triadic approach remains somewhat "descriptive" of what exists, but lacks the answer to *why* that would reveal the evangelist's meaning for this outstanding emphasis on three.

This lack of theological explanation is also reflected in the analysis of Matthew 8-9. According to Davies and Allison, Matthew 8-9 is "a unit whose primary functions can be specified," even though there could be a variety of themes applied to this section such as Christology, faith, discipleship, etc.²⁷⁵ They explain that the role of Matthew 8-9 in the Gospel of Matthew is preparation for Matthew 10. Chapter 5-7 provides the normative precepts and Chapters 8-9 normative examples. Therefore, according to them, Matthew 5-10 is Jesus' challenge to Israel, not the founding story of the church.²⁷⁶ Jesus speaks (5-7) and acts (8-9), and sends his disciples to speak and act as his representatives (10). Jesus' disciples should learn his words and copy his acts. Therefore, Jesus in Matthew 8-9 is a model for his disciples' behavior. This interpretation advances beyond those interpretations linking only Matthew 5-7 and Matthew 8-9 as a pair on the theme of Jesus' authority in word and deeds, or linking only Matthew 8-9 (narrative) and Matthew 10 (discourse) as paired on the theme of discipleship. But still they do not provide a clear theme *per se* for the collection of material in Matthew 8-9. If the main theme of Matthew 5-10 is "Jesus' challenge to Israel," Matthew 5-7 and Matthew 8-9 should not be interpreted as models for the words and behavior of Jesus' disciples. If so the focus cannot but move from Jesus to the disciples and, therefore, to the church. The main

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 5.

²⁷⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 5.

character of Matthew 5-10 is Jesus and the disciples are merely assistants and not the main characters. Thus Matthew 10 should be understood from the viewpoint of Jesus, and therefore Matthew 5-7 and 8-9 should be interpreted differently. Matthew 8-9 should be more than a behavioral model for the disciples because the authority for miracles is not possessed by the disciples. Davies and Allison's understanding of the three sections of Matthew 5-10 is not clear enough to define each section's role under the title of "Jesus' challenge to Israel."

In the analysis of Matthew 8-9, Davies and Allison focus on the miracle stories rather than discipleship as Jesus' actions. They observe three groups of three miracle stories according to the principle of triadic structure:²⁷⁷

- I. Three miracles (8:1-15) + summary report and words of Jesus (8:16-22)
 - a. 8:1-4 (a healing)
 - b. 8:5-13 (a healing)
 - c. 8:14-15 (a healing)
- II. Three more miracles, on and around the sea (8:23-9:8) + call of Levi and words of Jesus (9:9-17)
 - a. 8:23-27 (a nature miracle)
 - b. 8:28-34 (two demoniacs cured)
 - c. 9:1-8 (a healing)
- III. Three more miracles (9:18-31) + summary report and words of Jesus (9:35-8)
 - a. 9:18-26 (two people healed)
 - b. 9:27-31 (two people healed)
 - c. 9:32-34 (a healing)

Davies and Allison explain that 8:16-22 and 9:9-17 function as "the boundary markers" between the three blocks of three miracle stories. It is understandable if we consider the situation that there are no boundary markers between the three groups:

²⁷⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 67.

confusion about the boundaries and themes between the three miracle groups. Clearly the boundary markers help distinguish the three miracle groups, but we should ask how the nine miracles of Matthew 8-9 are divided into the present groups. The author awkwardly used the same miracle stories two times in his gospel (9:27-31//20:29-34; 9:32-34//12:22-24) and omitted several miracle stories of Mark (Mk 7:31-37; 8:22-27).

Davies and Allison however, do not provide a clear explanation for the relationship between these three miracle groups, as we noted above. About the first miracle group (8:1-15) they emphasize the universalism of Jesus. Jesus' salvation is not limited to any privileged group, but is given to all people including such people as a leper, a Gentile youth, or a woman. In the second miracle group (8:23-9:8), Davies and Allison focus on the reaction of the onlookers. While the three miracle stories are of diverse types, every story has the people's response at the end. Matthew 8:23-27 ends with wonder and questioning, 8:28-34 shows a negative response of the people asking Jesus to leave, and 9:1-8 brings the crowd's glorification of God. These responses show that a miracle is not an absolute tool to remove unbelief from the unfaithful; the interpretation of the miracles depends on the eyes of the witness. In the third miracle group (9:18-31), Davies and Allison do not provide any characteristic feature except that the three miracle stories become progressively shorter. After all, Davies and Allison do not provide any systematic understanding about the relationship of the three miracle groups or why they are divided into the present structure. Therefore, they are unable to present the theological intention of the author in Matthew 8-9, but only observe the division of Matthew 8-9 into three groups with some characteristic features that are not

critical for understanding the ultimate purpose of Matthew 8-9.

The fundamental reason Davies and Allison's triadic structure could not elucidate the theological intention of the Gospel seems to be that they presupposed the alternation of discourses and narratives as the most important feature in the study of the Gospel's structure.²⁷⁸ They could not read the Gospel of Matthew as a story purely from the viewpoint of triad;²⁷⁹ instead, they were under the influence of Bacon's theory of narrative-discourse alternation. While Davies and Allison did not accept Bacon's five book theory, they also did not provide any different explanation about the relationship between narrative and discourses.

To sum up, the most important conclusions about the structure of Matthew are these: There are five major discourses; the discourses and the narrative material are regularly alternated; from 14.1 on, Matthew's narrative faithfully follows Mark; the Matthean discourses and the narrative through chapter 12 feature triads. Unfortunately, these conclusions do not add up to any grand scheme. Leaving aside chronology, Matthew's arrangement has for its explanation no one structural principle. Sometimes our author has built triads, other times he has just been Mark's disciple. So despite its 'massive unity' (Moffatt, [*An Introduction to the New Testament*,] p.244), Gundry is right: our gospel is 'structurally mixed' (Gundry, *Commentary*, p.11).²⁸⁰

While Davies and Allison freshly analyzed the structure of Matthew 1-12 from the viewpoint of triad, they could not harmonize the double structures of triad and narrative-discourse alternation within the Gospel. As a result, they had no choice but to accept Gundry's "mixed structure" in Matthew, and this has become the limit of Davies

²⁷⁸ He lists the narrative-discourse structure as the most salient feature in the Gospel of Matthew. Therefore, his triadic explanation presupposes the narrative-discourse structure. See his book, *Matthew 1-7*, 72.

²⁷⁹ We should not forget the fact that discourses are also parts of a story.

²⁸⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 72.

and Allison's approach. Because they could not address the whole structure of Matthew and the sub-structure of Matthew 8-9, they could only follow the thematic interpretation of Held in an individual explanation of each pericope.

Conclusion of Triadic Approaches

The problem of triadic approaches is that the relationship between the three units has not been theologically explained in relation to the overarching structure of the Gospel. Most of the studies are partial, and even Davies and Allison's study focused on the limited arrangement of threes within Matthew 1-12. More seriously, the reason why Matthew used threes in his Gospel has not been theologically explained. It is not enough to insist that it is simply Matthew's preference to use threes frequently in his Gospel. One must be very sure that there is not a clear purpose beyond simple preference to explain his structuring according to threes. Likewise, Matthew 8-9 has been left with a rather superficial analysis about the meaning of the relationship between the three miracle groups.

Conclusion of History of Research

The interpretative key to Matthew 8-9 is how to understand its subordinate structure within the context, something which has been frequently neglected. The thematic approach divided Matthew 8-9 into threefold or fourfold thematic groups without giving any explanation about the relationship between them as a story. Narrative approaches analyzed Matthew 8-9 from the vertical viewpoint, showing its role in the larger plot of the Gospel of Matthew, but could not give a clear horizontal picture within Matthew 8-9. This is because they could not explain the relation between its main theme

and its subordinate structure. The approaches using literary techniques such as chiasm and triad could explain the surface structures in Matthew 8-9, but they also could not explain theologically the relationship between these apparent sub-structures with persuasive rationale.

The result is that Matthew 8-9 has not been analyzed for its own structure and for the manner in which the nine miracle stories are functioning within that structure. Only after such an analysis can that structure reflect its own message within the context provided by the evangelist.

Matthew 8-9 is still confronting the dilemma of harmonizing the text both microscopically (intra-textually) and macroscopically (inter-textually). Thus, we should still ask the same questions Held asked: First, why and how did the author collect nine miracle stories in Matthew 8-9? Second, what is the role of Matthew 8-9 in context?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY: MATTHEW'S THREE STAGE PROGRESSION

Introduction

Since Held's publication of his article in 1963, redaction criticism has become one of the main tools in the study of Matthew, and many scholars are still using this criticism in the study of Matthew.¹ The methodology of redaction criticism is seeking the author's intention by noting patterns of editing of the sources. From these patterns one can propose certain themes and even an overall theology, Christology and/or ecclesiology on the part of the evangelist. It is assumed, of course, that these interests and perspectives of the evangelist flow throughout the entire gospel in a harmonious whole.² Therefore, when studying the redaction of Matthew on chapters 8-9, the authorial intent must be operative here as well.³

As has been noted earlier, it is not sufficient to focus on each miracle if one is not able to judge also from the structuring of the stories, which is also due to Matthew's

¹ Donald Senior, "Directions in Matthean Studies," *The Gospel of Matthew in Current Study: Studies in memory of William G. Thompson, S.J.* ed. David E. Aune (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001), 5. See also his book, *What are they saying about Matthew?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 1-5.

² Of course, any explanation of the structure of Matthew 8-9 should be able to show why each miracle story is located at the present place. If this back and forth explanation is not possible and persuasive, then we can say that the explanation is not probable. Luz criticizes Held's thematic approach in the point that "he is hardly concerned at all with the totality of Matthew's Gospel as the narrative frame for the miracle stories and as the key to understanding them." See his article, "Die Wundergeschichten von Mt 8-9," 150.

³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 1.

redaction, how the arrangement of the stories help to make his point, serve the gospel. Several attempts have been made in this regard, as we have reviewed in Chapter One. Either the scholars isolate the chapters and cannot show how their proposed analysis fits with Matthew's overall plan, or they remain aloof from the redaction of the stories and suggest how the chapters fit their analysis of Gospel structure.

Here we suggest a new method which can harmonize each miracle story and the overall structure of nine miracle stories in Matthew 8-9. As many scholars have already observed, Matthew is full of triadic structures.⁴ But unfortunately this analysis has not been so persuasive and helpful in explaining the authorial intention in Matthew 8-9. However, if we carefully read those triadic structures, we can find that in many cases the three elements are arranged progressively. This progressive three stage arrangement reveals the author's overall plan in the structure of Matthew 8-9. We will call this progressive arrangement as Matthew's Three Stage Progression, and this method will be used for the analysis of Matthew 8-9 as a new tool.

Matthew's Three Stage Progression

What Is Matthew's Three Stage Progression (MTSP)?

The type of composition referred to by our use of Matthew's Three Stage Progression involves a narrative structure which has three parts, but one in which each of the three parts has a 'role' which is not interchangeable. It is a structure where the three parts move towards a goal, in a sort of escalation.

Before we go further in discussing Matthew's Three Stage Progression, and how

⁴ This will be demonstrated below.

it is distinct from “Triad” structure, we should pause to provide an Excursus on the ubiquitous practice of using ‘three’ in structures.

Excursus: “Threeness” in the Ancient World

The completeness or fullness of the number three is reflected in the thoughts of the ancient people.⁵ We do not wish to say that all these following examples are somehow connected by genre or form. Our point is quite the opposite. We wish to note the prevalence of grouping in threes, with special focus here, on forms of communication oral and written in ancient cultures across the ancient world, East and West. The point we wish to make is very simply, that the evidence shows us that grouping literary elements in threes was not strange or unknown. After this small excursus, we can note that if scholars identify Matthew’s grouping in threes, it is not that the evangelist presents something brand new in narratives. Rather, what we want to acknowledge is that Matthew, belonging to the first century world, would have been familiar with this ubiquitous method of organization.

In Hellenistic World

Before we note how three is used in literary compositions and arrangements, let us pause to notice the evidence from the Hellenistic and Imperial world that threeness is often used to express completeness or perfection. The very cosmos of antiquity was understood to be divided into three, each with its reigning deity, Zeus (the ruler of heaven and earth), Poseidon (ruler of the sea), and Hades (the ruler of the underworld).

⁵ For example, see Charles D. Perry, “The Tyranny of Three,” in *CJ* 68 (1972), 144-148; Win F. Hansen, “Three a Third Time,” in *CJ* 71 (1976), 253-54; Gareth Morgan, “Butz Triads: Towards a Grammar of Folk Poetry,” in *Folklore* 94 (1983), 44-56; Alan Dundes, “The Number Three in American Culture,” ed. by Alan Dundes, *Every Man His Way* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968), 401-424. Of course, we should know that seven or ten are also sometimes used as meaning completeness.

Philosophically, the early Pythagoreans discovered the isosceles triangle, and its ‘threeness’ to hold the basis of all knowledge.⁶ Aristotle in his turn considered that the number three determines the world and all in it. In fact, Aristotle reasoned that human beings received ‘threeness’ from Nature.⁷ In the process of Nature, there are three principles which are to be considered basic: form, privation and matter.⁸

In the Hellenistic Jewish literature, Philo has a similar view about the number three with Aristotle. When he allegorically interprets the meaning of sixth day in Genesis 1: 26-28, the creation of humankind, he emphasizes that “the number three is an image of a solid body, because a solid can be divided according to a threefold division.”⁹ Therefore, the number three has the image of completeness or fullness echoes Aristotle. Philo also interprets the number three in Gen 18:2 where it says the Lord visited Abraham, but in the form of three mysterious visitors. For him, this ‘threeness’ expresses the concept of God’s immeasurability (i.e., completeness or fullness). According to Philo, God appeared to the visual soul (i.e., Abraham) with his two heavenly guards (therefore total three), each figure of whom was not measured in any respect by human beings. God measures everything and cannot be measured; therefore, He is complete. Philo sees this important meaning of three in Abraham’s order to Sarah that she use three measures of

⁶ Philo, “Questions and Answers on Genesis,” IV, 8.

⁷ Aristotle, *De Caelo*, trans. J. L. Stocks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922). Book I, 268a, line 20-25.

⁸ Aristotle, “Physica,” *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Richard McKeon, ed. (New York: Random House, 1941), Book I, 218-236.

⁹ Philo, “Allegorical Interpretation I,” *The Works of Philo*, trans. C. D. Yonge (Boston, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1993) 6th printing, 25.

the finest flour to make loaves for the guests (Genesis 18:6). Philo sees the completeness or perfection of the divine mysteries as contrasted to the incompleteness of the visual soul.

These three measures should, as it were, be kneaded together, in order that so the soul.....may receive the characters of his power and beneficence, and becoming initiated into the perfect mysteries, may not be too ready to divulge the divine secrets to anyone, but may treasure them up in herself, and keeping a check over her speech, may conceal them in silence; for the words of the scripture are, "To make secret cakes."¹⁰

For Philo, not one or two but three measures are needed for Sarah to deal with the complete divine mysteries properly. Here we can confirm that the number three is linked with completeness or fullness.

Philo would have many such opportunities to interpret the threeness that occurs in the narratives that flow throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. It appears that even in ancient sagas, three appears as a number suggestion completion. For example people are mentioned in threes, like the sons of sons of Noah, Shem, Ham and Japheth, who were the ancestors of the whole (therefore complete or full) races in the world in Genesis 6:10. The three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are the set who represent the foundations of the Jewish people and the three first and most famous of kings, Saul, David, and Solomon. If we move to composition numerous examples can be cited. For example, the priests' blessing on Israel given in Numbers 6:23, 24 is presented in three: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." Also in the narrative of

¹⁰ Philo, "The Sacrifice of Abel and Cain," *The Works of Philo*. trans. C. D. Yonge (Boston, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, Inc., 2002) 6th printing, 101.

Elijah's contest with the priests of Baal, the prophet gives orders that four jars of water are to be poured onto the wood, three times (1 Kings 18:34). Threeness is also present in the praises of the Seraphs before God in the vision of Isaiah 6:3, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts". In a negative context, the Book of Jeremiah holds God's warning to Jeremiah about the duplicitous people who mask their deception, "Do not trust in these deceptive words, 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord'" (Jer 7:4).

In Christian Tradition

If we explore pre-gospel Christian traditions that would find their way into the gospels, the narrative elements can be found here as well. For example, the Q traditions would hold the three temptations of Jesus by the Satan (Q 4: 1-4,9-12,5-8,13¹¹), while pre-Markan tradition would supply Jesus' three time petition for a possible release from the coming cross (Mark 14:32-42); Jesus' three visits to the sleeping apostles (Mark 14:25-42), Peter's three time denial of Jesus (Mark 14:66-72); and Pilate's three time arguing with the crowd over Jesus's judgment (Mark 15:6-18) of Peter against his swear to Jesus.

Outside the gospels, we note that Acts of the Apostles hold the account of Peter's vision of the sheet descending from heaven, three times, each time holding "all kinds of four footed creatures, reptiles and birds of the air" with the voice pronouncing them clean (Acts 10:9-16, esp. v 16) .

Besides theses narratives, certain of literary forms also display an organization in

¹¹James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann and John S. Kloppenborg ed., *The Critical Edition of Q* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 22-40.

threes. For example in the special Lukan tradition of the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (Lk 13:6-9, the owner exclaims that he has looked for fruit on the tree for three years, and now is ready to have the tree cut down . This suggests that the listeners would agree that three years is a completely sufficient time frame for the tree to show its capability of bearing fruit.

Outside Synoptic tradition, three is also apparent in the gospel of John, for example in the three witnesses to Christ: The Spirit, the water and the blood, (1 John 5:8) which are understood to express the completeness of the testimony.

Conclusion

These examples help to show that organizing narratives or elements in a story or teaching using three was common.¹² Sometimes the threeness is meant to reinforce the reality, as in the prayers of the Seraphs (Isa 6:3) or the false devotion of the sinning people in Jer 7:4 or the total soaking of the wood Elijah orders, or the three times lowering of the sheet from heaven. Other times, it expresses an entity's completeness.¹³, such as the cosmic composition, Nature's divisions, the aspects of a person, the Lord's completeness, the completeness of a priest's blessing of Israel, and in the New Testament, the threeness of the testimony to Jesus as the Christ. A third way in which three is used, however, is in narratives that progress so that the third element is the climax. We see this in the Q story of Jesus' three temptations, Jesus' prayers in

¹² For more reference, see "Threeness in the Teaching of Jesus," in *ExpTim.* 75 (1964), 228-330; Delling, "τρεῖς," 216-225; Davies & Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.58-72; Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew's Trilogy of Parables: The Nation, the Nations and the Reader in Matthew 21:28-22:14* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33-39; Perry, "The Tyranny of Three," 146-147.

¹³ Ibid, 216-225.

Gethsemane which end with his acceptance; Jesus three time correction to his sleeping disciple which conclude with his invitation for them to sleep on; Peter's three time denials that end with the cock crowing to recall to him his former bragging about his readiness to die for Jesus; Pilate's escalating argument with the people over Jesus' judgment

The evidence shows us that the use of three in organizing narratives, and even elements of a form was favored and employed for reinforcement or to convey completeness or to help in a progressive story,¹⁴ and therefore cannot be viewed as anything but natural and at home in the world of communications whether it is West or East.¹⁵

Threeness as an Organizational Principle: Triads and Progressions

In the discussion above, we see that three is variously used, for emphasis, for completeness but also in stories with a progression. Matthew was exposed to traditions around him, and in particular these various ways of using three as an organizational principal. As was already shown in the first chapter of the Dissertation, the *Status Quaestionis*, Matthean scholars have already noted how triads feature in Matthew's organization in the gospel. We will be revisiting some of these observations in this chapter, to illustrate that these triads not only function to emphasize and to express completeness, but also, as scholars will show, to compose a progression where each

¹⁴ Delling, "τρεῖς," p.216, footnote 1.

¹⁵ For example, see Charles D. Perry, "The Tyranny of Three," in *CJ* 68 (1972), 144-148; Win F. Hansen, "Three a Third Time," in *CJ* 71 (1976), 253-54; Gareth Morgan, "Butz Triads: Towards a Grammar of Folk Poetry," in *Folklore* 94 (1983), 44-56; Alan Dundes, "The Number Three in American Culture," in *Every Man His Way* (ed. Alan Dundes ;Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, , 1968), 401-424.

component part has its role, and the third element is the climax of that progression.

In contrast, a simple triad is one in which a set of three elements exists, but they do not have to be interconnected, or hold any kind of progression. There is no ‘plot’ so to speak. A good example of this, and one found in Matthew’s gospel, is the Sermon on the Mount which Dale C. Allison has analyzed as a set of triads.¹⁶ The dramatic effect of the collected aphorisms side by side cannot be denied, but it is a distinct dynamism from that which occurs if one plans a progression from beginning, through middle to the end.

As a review, the box below brings out the difference between the triadic structures, where three units are set side by side, with no implications concerning their ordering. In contrast the Three Stage Progression that is used in story telling in antiquity, uses three movements, but they cannot be random. Rather each movement has its own role and relationship to the other two, for the narrative, progresses to its end.

Table 2. Comparison of the Triad and MTSP

Structure Type	Methods of Arrangement
A Triadic Structure (arranged in random)	ABC, ACB, BAC, BCA, CAB, CBA
Matthew’s Three Stage Progression (arranged according to the logical order)	A→B→C (only one way)

MTSP in the Gospel of Matthew

MTSP is found frequently in a. Smaller Forms; b. Narratives; c. Organization of Discourses; and d. Sections of the Gospel.

¹⁶ For the triads in the Sermon on the Mount, see D. C. Allison’s article, “The Structure of the Sermon on the Mount,” *JBL* 106 (1987), 423-45.

MTSP in Smaller Narratives

Peter's Three time Denial of Jesus (Mt 26:69-75)

In Matthew's redaction of Mark's account of Peter's denials (Mk 14:66-72// Matt 26:69-75), he has created a clearly escalating arrangement of the three time denials.¹⁷

- v. 68 : 1st denial: but he denied it, saying, "I do not know or understand what you are talking about."
- v. 70 2nd denial: but again he denied it.
- v. 71 3rd denial: but he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know this man you are talking about."

- v. 70 1st denial: but he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about."
- v. 72 2nd denial: Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man."
- v. 74 3rd denial: Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man."

Mk 14:66-72 is arranged so that Peter's first denial is that he does not know what the servant girl is talking about, then a narrative report that he denied his knowledge of Jesus a second time. In the third denial, an escalation has occurred in that now Peter begins to curse and swear and take an oath that he does not know Jesus.

So here Mark has a progressive narration of three, drawn from the tradition, yet whereas Mark uses the third denial as the climax, the first two leading steps to the third do not show the special progression and drama that Matthew's redaction achieves. Matthew first copies Mark, streamlining the response of Peter to clarify that he does not know what the girl is saying. He avoids the inclusion of not understanding, as though Peter would be that dull. But he adds "before all of them". This is far more condemning since it is not a private conversation with the girl, as in Mark, but conveys the idea that everyone warming themselves is close enough to hear the girl and wait for Peter's

response. This amounts to a public apostasy of Jesus. Second whereas Mark simply reports through narrative that Peter repeated the denial, Matthew reports that Peter made an oath, giving the actual words “I do not know the man”. Here the audience would remember Jesus teaching against swearing oaths (Matt 5:34-37). More seriously, Peter is not just making an oath, but a false one, calling on God to witness what is a lie. In this way, Matthew ensures that in copying the third denial from Mark’s gospel, the statement that Peter began to curse along with his false oath creates a truly shocking climax to the tragic scene of Peter’s denials. This detail of redaction helps to emphasize the dramatic moment of the cock crowing, and Peter’s remembering his bragging to Jesus.

*Matthew 21:28-22:14: Three Parables: 1) the Parable of Two Sons (21:28-32); 2) the Parable of the Tenants (21:33-46); 3) the Parable of the Wedding Feast (22:1-14).*¹⁸

Many scholars have recognized, not only the tripartite organization of the parables in Matthew 21:28-22:14 but also the progression that is achieved by their placement. For example, Wesley G. Olmstead observes; “Matthew has taken three parables from separate sources and has woven them into an impressive unity.”¹⁹ More particularly he explains.²⁰

The trilogy features a series of progressions. The three parables tell the stories, respectively, of Israel’s rejection of John, Jesus and Jesus’ messengers. The first proclaims the exclusion of the Jewish elite from the kingdom, the second announces the transfer of the kingdom, the third points to the visible historical expression of this judgment.

Thus, from the unity of this arrangement, Matthew emphasizes Israel’s rejection of Jesus

¹⁸ See Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew’s Trilogy of Parables: the Nation, the Nations and the Reader in Matthew 21:28-22:14* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 22-33.

¹⁹ Ibid., 165.

²⁰ Ibid., 164.

and the transfer of the kingdom. Israel is indicted, and now the Gentiles are joining the kingdom. God's people should keep their faithful relationship with Jesus by responding to his call.

Carter and Heil hold that Matthew's intent is for "the audience's progression through a sequence of three parables."²¹ What they mean by this is that these parables are not standing without a connection to the previous story, Matt 21:23-27.²² In that narrative, Matthew has reported Mark's story of the authorities' challenge to Jesus about the source of his authority. Since they will not answer Jesus' counter question to them about the source of John's baptism, Jesus refuses them an answer. These parables that follow address that contention between those religious leaders who are thought to be faithful, and the truth about where faithful response lies.

In their discussion of the first parable, the Man Who Had Two Sons (21:28-32), they note that it describes "a double condemnation of the leaders as well as a model and warning for the audience of disciples."²³ So here, the reference is a warning to the leaders who are obdurate and reject God's will. As for the Matthean audience, the message is that, unlike these religious leaders, they will want to repent and follow God's will like the second son. The second parable of the Householder, the Vineyard, and the Tenants (21:33-46) placed as it is, seems to explain the first parable in more detail: the leaders reject the householder's son (i.e., Jesus, Son of God) as it begins, "Listen to another parable" (21:33). Here "the parable affirms the identity and role of those who do

²¹ Carter and Heil, *Matthew's Parables*, 148.

²² Ibid., 16.

²³ Ibid., 159.

recognize God's purpose."²⁴ Those who bear fruits will inherit the kingdom of God.

The third parable of the Wedding Feast (22:1-14) issues a warning and encouragement for the audience.²⁵ Those who do respond to God's calling should be sure to come wearing their wedding clothes (i.e., keep appropriate faithful behaviors).

For his part, Frederick D. Bruner calls these three parables "The People-of-God Parables" rather than "The Israel Parables" because they are really directed at the Church of Matthew and not just against the resistant leaders of Israel.²⁶

The parable trilogy contrasts the false and true people of God of all times, in an interesting chronology. Topically, the first parable centers on *the ministry of John the Baptist*, the second on *the mission of Jesus the Son*, and the third on *the mission of Jesus' church* – John, Jesus, church.

In these three parables, he observes a progressive arrangement according to the chronological development, 'a little outline of God's world history.' "The first parable tells us mainly about the *ancient* people of God; the second mainly about the *transfer* from the ancient to the new people of God; and the third tells us mainly about the *new* people of God."²⁷ Bruner's analysis clearly shows the MTSP writing technique.

Matthew's Three Stage Progression in Narratives

Matthew also shows his sensitivity to the most effective progressions in the way he both redacts his sources and creates his own structures in the narratives of the

²⁴ Ibid., 167.

²⁵ Ibid., 176.

²⁶ Frederick D. Bruner, *Matthew 13-28: A Commentary*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 369.

²⁷ Ibid., 394.

gospel.²⁸

Matthew's Opening Title and Its Relation to the Genealogy (Matthew 1: 1-17)

The gospel opens with three titles of Jesus, arranged progressively.

“An account of the genealogy of Jesus

- 1) the Messiah
- 2) the son of David
- 3) the son of Abraham” (Mt 1:1).

In this titular verse of the gospel which has no verb, Jesus has three titles: Messiah, son of David, and son of Abraham. What is interesting about the title of Jesus, Christ in the synoptic gospels is that the form of ‘Jesus Christ’ does not occur as a common title so frequently except in Mt 1:1, 18 and Mk 1:1 as in the letters of Paul. This proves that the main purpose of the synoptic gospels is Christology of Jesus.

Jesus’ Messiahship is strengthened more with the title of ‘son of David.’ While Mk 1:1 describes Jesus as “Christ, Son of God,” Mt1:1 calls Jesus as “[1] Christ, [2] son of David, [3] son of Abraham.” This shows how Matthew interprets Jesus’ Messiahship. We should pay attention to the order of the titles which is reversed chronologically. In this order we can read the author’s intention why ‘son of David’ is mentioned first and ‘son of Abraham’ later. First, Matthew expands Jesus as ‘son of David’ according to the Hebrew traditions after he calls Jesus ‘Christ.’ The title of ‘son of David’ is used as meaning Christ in OT (Isa 11:10; Jer 23:5, 33:15; Zech 3:8, 6:12; Jn 7:42) as well as in extra-biblical texts (4QPatrBless 3; 4QFlor1:11-12; 4QpIsa^a.frags. 7-10, 11-17).²⁹ This

²⁸ For the popularity of three in Matthew, see Willowghby C. Allen, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to S. Matthew*. ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912), lxxv; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 86-7.

²⁹ Davies & Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 156.

might imply that Jesus' Davidic bloodline was emphasized for Jesus' Messiahship in the Matthean community. But to the author, this addition of the title of 'son of David' to Jesus was not enough in fulfilling the condition of the Messiah. Matthew added another title to Jesus: 'son of Abraham.' Abraham is the founder of Israel to whom God made some covenants including Messiahship (Gen 22:18). In addition, he is the father of all nations, and Jesus is Abraham's offspring through whom all nations will be blessed.

The second attribute, 'son of Abraham' has a still wider scope. It is not only the royal line which culminates in Jesus. The list of ancestors is taken back as far as Abraham, the progenitor of the whole people, not only of one tribe. Above all, Abraham is the bearer of the ancient promise, 'by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves (Gen 12:3).'³⁰

With these three titles, the author insists that Jesus is the Messiah who fulfills all the scriptural covenants from David back to Abraham. The order of three titles should not be changed; otherwise, it will lose the original meaning that the author intended. These three titles of Jesus arranged progressively to God's promises prescribes what Jesus will do in the following passages. Therefore, it is natural that we see the genealogy from Abraham through David to Jesus in the following passage.

The genealogy in Matt 1:2-17 illustrates Jesus' bloodline up to Abraham, but the bloodline is artificially redacted according to the MTSP writing technique. The descendents of Abraham are simplified into 42 generations and the 42 generations are divided into three divisions each composed of 14 generations. While there are a lot of explanations about this arrangement,³¹ we can interpret that the three divisions represent

³⁰ Herman Hendrickx, *The Infancy Narratives* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975), 25.

³¹ See Davies & Allison, pp.161-165; John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Texts*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2005), 86-87.

the three periods of Israel history.

- 1st period (from Abraham to David): Growth of Israel into a kingdom
- 2nd period (from David to Josiah): the decline of the kingdom
- 3rd period (from Jeconiah to Jesus): destruction of the kingdom until Jesus' restoration

The number fourteen (7×2) means a (double) complete period, which symbolically distinguishes one period from others.³² This is clear when we consider that many generations are omitted in each period. The first period starts with a seventy five year old man with no son and develops into a nation, peaked with the establishment of the United Kingdom by David. This prosperous kingdom diminishes more and more for fourteen generations (symbolically) until the exile to Babylon. After that, the kingdom perfectly vanished with no king for another fourteen generations until the birth of Jesus, king of the Jews (2:2). With these three divisions of forty two generations, the whole history of Israel is concluded with the coming of the Messiah, 'king of the Jews.' The MTSP writing technique is a very effective method in describing the coming of the Messiah in the darkness of Israel's history.

MTSP in the Structure of a Gospel Section

The Infancy Narratives and their Relation to the Genealogy

First, we should note that the actual infancy narratives Matthew 1:18-2:23 belong to the larger cycle which includes the genealogy. Scholars see here, two cycles of narratives. Since Matthew 1:1-2:23 has two cycles of MTSP structures.

The infancy narrative structure of some scholars such as Wolfgang Trilling,³³ Herman

³² Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*. WBC 33A-B (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993), 5-9.

³³ Wolfgang Trilling, *The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, vol.1. xiii; 3-28.

Hendrickx,³⁴ and D. A. Carson³⁵ can be modified as follows.

(1st cycle of MTSP: Birth of Jesus)

1:1-17: the genealogy of Jesus

1:18-25: the announcement of the birth of Jesus

2:1-12: the visit of the Magi

(2nd cycle of MTSP: Crisis of baby Jesus)

2:13-15: the flight into Egypt

2:16-18: the massacre of the innocents

2:19-23: the return from Egypt

While they do not separate this story clearly into two cycles, it is natural to separate them into two parts: 1) birth of Jesus, 2) crisis of Jesus. It is difficult to prove with confidence if the crisis story of Jesus is influenced by the OT story of Moses or by the birth narratives of ancient Greek heroes generally followed by a story of crisis,³⁶ but the close relationship between these two cycles cannot be denied. The first cycle of MTSP shows the extraordinary birth of Jesus. Jesus' bloodline from Abraham and David shows his noble birth as the Messiah according to bloodline from Abraham and David shows his noble birth as the Messiah according to Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:1-3) and Davidic covenant (2 Sam 7:4-17). In addition to the noble birth, the author emphasizes Jesus' virgin birth, which proves the divinity of Jesus. This divine birth is strengthened by the visit of the Magi from Persia with three gifts to celebrate the birth of the King of the Jews. This visit story may be related with the Hellenistic or rabbinic parallels in which a heavenly phenomenon is reported after the birth or death of a great man.³⁷ This first cycle

³⁴ Herman Hendrickx, *Infancy Narratives*, vi; 117-123.

³⁵ D. A. Carson, "Matthew," 51; 60-97.

³⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 190-195; 258-59.

³⁷ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 25.

shows a perfect unit trying to prove a divine birth of Jesus, which is arranged progressively in three divisions.

The second cycle of MTSP, closely connected with the birth story of Jesus, shows the crisis after the birth of Jesus, as seen in many birth stories of great heroes such as Gilgamesh, Cyrus, Hercules, Alexander, Moses, etc.³⁸ Joseph flees to Egypt with Jesus, following the commandment given by the angel, which is a fulfillment of OT prophecies (Hos 11:1). Therefore, Herod has to be satisfied with killing infants under three years old in Bethlehem instead of Jesus, which is another fulfillment of the OT prophecies (Jer 31:15). Finally baby Jesus comes back to Galilee after the death of Herod to fulfill an OT Prophecy (Pss 22:6-8; Isa 11:1; Dan 9:16). This second cycle shows how Jesus overcomes the crisis and fulfills the OT prophecies. Those two cycles describes the infancy narrative dramatically according to the MTSP writing technique.

Davies and Allison observe a cluster of triads in the Sermon on the Mount of Matthew 5-7. While it is not easy to find a progressive arrangement in the discourses because there is no plot in the discourse like a narrative, the Sermon on the Mount shows a plenty of examples of MTSP structures. Davies and Allison divide the whole section of the Sermon on the Mount into three parts.³⁹

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5: 3-7:27): The First Major Discourse

Introduction (4:23-5:2)
 Sermon (5:3-7:27)
 Conclusion (7:28-8:1)

³⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 258-59.

³⁹ Ibid., 64.

This is the most basic form of MTSP, as Aristotle suggested: beginning, middle and end.⁴⁰ The introduction provides the background of Jesus' sermon. Then, Jesus' sermon is narrated progressively with three divisions (see below). Finally the section ends with the response of the crowd: astonishment. These three divisions are arranged progressively according to the logical order.⁴¹

Davies & Allison also analyze the section of Sermon (5:3-7:27) into three divisions arranged progressively.⁴²

Nine Blessings (5:3-12)

Main body (5:13-7:12)

Warnings (7:13-27)

The section of Nine Blessings plays the role of introduction to the sermon. This introduction characterizes the main body of the sermon as blessings not as requirements.⁴³ The main body of the sermon, which is also composed of a MTSP structure (see below), shows Jesus' authoritative teachings different from Israel's law teachers. Finally these blessed teachings end with warnings, which is related with eschatological rewards and punishments. The order of this section cannot be changed in random to keep the flow and intention of the sermon smoothly.

Davies and Allison divide the main body of the sermon into three sections, which

⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Poetry*, 1450b (lines 23-34).

⁴¹ Some scholars show similar analyses. For example, Peter F. Ellis divides the Sermon on the Mount into three sections: Introduction (5:2-16), Body of the Sermon (5:17-7:12), Conclusion (7:13-27). See his book, *Matthew: His Mind and His Message* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1974), 37-38. Donald A. Hagner also shows a similar analysis. See his book, *Matthew 1-13*, vii-viii.

⁴² Davies & Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 64.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 466.

is also arranged progressively according to the MTSP writing technique.

Torah (5:17-48)
 Cult (6:1-18)
 Social Issues (6:19-7:12)

If these three divisions are arranged randomly, the original meaning will be attenuated.

First, Jesus' teaching is focused on the Torah. The purpose of his teaching is to fulfill or complete the law by comparing the old and new righteousness. Then Jesus' teaching develops into the inner motivation of religious life through the examples of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. Those teachings have never been written in the Torah. Finally the teaching cultivates the inner motivation into how to serve God correctly in the personal and social life. This revolutionary teaching about God and the heavenly kingdom which Israel has never heard before brings people into surprise and re-consideration of their religious life.

The Mission Discourse (Matthew 9:35- 11:1): The Second Major Discourse

Dorothy J. Weaver leads the way to this analysis in her *Matthew's Missionary Discourse* in which she identifies 9:35-38 as the narrative introduction, as well as 10:1-5a to the series of three exhortations.⁴⁴

- I. 9:35-10:5a (The narration Introduction)
- II. 10:5b-42 (An extended and uninterrupted discourse by Jesus)
 - a. 10:5b-15
 - b. 10:16-23
 - c. 10:24-42
- III. 11:1 (The narrative conclusion)

Her literary analysis is based upon Jesus' repetition of the characteristic statement at the

⁴⁴ Dorothy Jean Weaver, *Matthew's Missionary Discourse: A Literary Critical Analysis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 73-74.

end of each part: “Truly, I say to you...” (10:15, 23, 42).⁴⁵ In the first stage, Jesus instructs his disciples what they should do as missionaries: the disciples’ ministry.⁴⁶ In the second stage, the looming persecutions and the disciples’ response to them are emphasized, contrary to the disciples’ initiative actions in the first stage.⁴⁷ The final stage concludes Jesus’ instructions from the viewpoint of relationship between the disciples and Jesus.⁴⁸

A new thrust characterizes the third section of the discourse. The previous section (10.16-23) shifted the focus of attention from the initiatives which the disciples are to take in their ministry (10.5b-15) to the violent persecution which others will initiate against them. This section (10.24-42) now shifts the focus of attention back to the initiatives of the disciples. But rather than focusing either on ministry (as in 10.5b-15) or on persecution (as in 10.16-23), 10.24-42 combines these two emphases within a discussion focusing on relationships.

The disciples’ initiative ministry and their overcome of the coming persecutions (i.e., becoming fearless witnesses) can become successful only through their strong relationship with Jesus. These three divisions show the progressive arrangement of the MTSP writing technique

Leon Morris analyzes the discourse as follows:⁴⁹

1. The Harvest and the Workers (9:35-38)
2. The Mission of the Twelve (10:1-42)
 - a. The Twelve (10:1-4)
 - b. The Charge to the Twelve (10:5-15)

⁴⁵ Ibid., 74.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 83-90.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 90-102.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 104.

⁴⁹ Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*. PC (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992), vii; 241-271.

- c. Troubles Ahead (10:16-25)
- d. Fear and Loyalty (10:26-42)

According to this analysis, the second discourse itself (10:5-42) is divided into three sections. The first section of the discourse narrates Jesus' charges of mission to the twelve disciples. Naming twelve disciples, Jesus limits their mission of teaching and healing within the border of Israel. Then he warns severe persecutions on the way to the mission. At the final stage Jesus encourages them not to be afraid of the authorities three times. The disciples will not be respected by the authorities, because they even do not respect Jesus. But Jesus asks them loyalty to their mission. This mission discourse is arranged progressively in three divisions according to the logical development of Jesus' mission charge – persecution warning – encouragement.

John Nolland shows a similar division with that of Morris. The difference is 10:24-25. While Morris thinks this part as the conclusion of the warning, Noland understands it as an introduction to the final instruction. He analyzes the mission discourse as follows.⁵⁰

- Instructions Part I (10:5-15)
- Part II (10:16-23)
- Part III (10:24-42).

While Nolland does not clearly title the contents of the three parts of instruction, he divides these three sections as (1) an extended set of specific mission directives (the nature of the mission initiatives),⁵¹ (2) difficulty of the task (the prospect of hostility),⁵²

⁵⁰ John Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, ix; 405-447.

⁵¹ Ibid., 414.

⁵² Ibid., 422.

(3) requirement of loyalty as the witness of Jesus.⁵³ Nolland's analysis also shows the TNP writing technique arranged progressively according to the logical development of the discourse.

The Parable Discourse (Matthew 13:1-52): The Third Major Discourse

The parable discourse (13:1-52) has been debated considerably by many scholars, but there is no unanimous analysis. Some scholars approach it from the viewpoint of chiasm,⁵⁴ but this approach does not show 'any obvious symmetrical structure as D. A. Hagner criticizes.⁵⁵ Some scholars approach this parable discourse from the viewpoint of MTSP. For example, Davies and Allison analyze the parable discourses from the viewpoint of triadic structures as follows:⁵⁶

- Section 1 (13:1-23)
- Section 2 (13:24-43)
- Section 3 (13:44-52)

First, within each of the three sections, the organization features three parts: (1) the parable(s), (2) the discussion of parable(s), (3) the interpretation of a parable. According to Davies and Allison, the first section (13:1-23: The Sower) describes "the unexpected response to Jesus himself or the unbelief of so many Jews in Matthew's day."⁵⁷

⁵³ Ibid., 432.

⁵⁴ For example, see D. Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus: Pictures of Revolution* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), 516-522; Craig L. Bloomberg, *Matthew*. NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 210-225; Warren Carter and John P. Heil, *Matthew's Parables: Audience-Oriented Perspectives* (Washington, DC: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1998), 64-95; David L. Turner, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 332-356.

⁵⁵ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 364.

⁵⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 370-372. ⁵⁶ Other scholars who are in accord with this analysis of three progressions are Donald Senior (*Matthew*, 146) and Wolfgang Trilling, (*The Gospel according to St. Matthew*. trans. by Kevin Smyth. vol. II [New York: Herder and Herder, 1969], 3-31).

They see this first section recalling the context of chapters 11-12, in which Jesus' ministry to Israel was not successful due to their hardened heart. Davies and Allison observe a progressed theme in the second section (13:24-43 Parable of the Weeds, the Mustard Seed and the Yeast): "human failure is part of a wider problem, namely, the cosmic struggle between God and Satan."⁵⁸ It is not simply a matter of faith, but a matter of an origin. Those who reject the Messiah are 'sons of the devil' and they are fundamentally different from those who accept Jesus as the Messiah. The weeds will be burned and the wheat will be gathered. In the final and climactic stage (13:44-52: The Treasure in the Field, the Merchant in Search of Pearls, and the Dragnet), the discourse comes to its final messages with "the certainty of the kingdom's ultimate victory despite all appearances."⁵⁹

Matthew's Three Stage Progression in Larger Sections of the Gospel

Davies and Allison Analysis of Matthew's Gospel 1:1-12: 50

The outline below shows the narratives of the Matthean gospel as set out by Davies and Allison, but the problem is that they do not include the discourses in the first twelve chapters: the Sermon on the Mount; and the Mission Discourse. The triadic structure of the sections is represented here, to be sure.

The Structure of Chapters 1-12

I. Early History (1:18-4:22)

1. The conception and infancy of Jesus (1:18-25)
2. John the Baptist and Jesus (3:1-17)

⁵⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 403.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 431.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 449.

3. The beginning of Jesus' ministry (4:1-22)

II. A Cycle of Nine Miracle Stories (8:1-9:34)

1. Three miracles (8:1-15)
Summary statement + teaching material (8:16-22)
2. Three more miracles, on and around the sea (8:23-9:8)
The calling of Levi + teaching material (9:9-17)
3. Three more miracles (9:18-26)
Summary statement + teaching material (9:35-8)

III. Confrontation with 'This Generation' (11:2-12:50)

1. John, Jesus, and this generation (11:2-30)
2. The ministry of mercy (12:1-21)
3. On discernment (12:22-50)

Certainly Davies and Allison have contributed greatly to identifying three part progression in the discourses, but without them in place in the gospel, the progression of narratives and their significance cannot be properly balanced and identified fully. Here, let us notice that at this point, Davies and Allison have seen the triads in the miracle chapters, 8-9, but the triads have not been checked to see if they too hold a progression.

The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus (Matthew 26: 1- 28:5)

John P. Heil uncovers an elaborate formal schema in Chapters 26-28. He analyzes the material into three major sections, each of which is also composed of three sets of alternating and contrasting scenes.⁶⁰

The MTSP Structure of Matthew 26-28

I. Matt 26:1-56: Jesus Prepares for and Accepts His Death.

- (1) 26:1-16 Jesus anticipates his death by Jewish leaders.
- (2) 26:17-29 Jesus prepares his disciples for his death.
- (3) 26:30-56 Jesus accepts death through prayer.

II. Matt 26:57-27:54: The innocent Jesus dies as true King and Son of God.

- (1) 26:57-75 Jesus admits his divine sonship.

⁶⁰ John Paul Heil, *The Death and Resurrection of Jesus: A Narrative-Critical Reading of Matthew 26-28* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 2-3.

- (2) 27:1-14 The innocent Jesus admits his kingship.
- (3) 27:15-54 Jesus dies as God's innocent, royal Son.

- III. Matt 27:55-28:20: The authority of the risen Jesus prevails through witnesses of his death, burial, and resurrection.
- (1) 27:55-61 Women followers witness Jesus' death and burial.
 - (2) 27:62-28:4 Jewish leaders try to thwart Jesus' resurrection.
 - (3) 28:5-20 The authority of the risen Jesus prevails.

As a whole, Heil really describes Matthew's three step progression structure as he emphasizes the "dynamic process of communication involved in the intricate structures formed by these Matthean scenes."⁶¹ Besides the three part division of the: (1) passion, (2) death, and (3) resurrection) each of these stages is also arranged progressively.

Matthew's Three Stage Progression in the Gospel Structure

Matthew's Gospel Structure as a Three Part Progression

Some scholars, such as Jack Dean Kingsbury have seen the gospel structure itself as being able to be divided into three progression steps.⁶²

1. The person of Jesus Messiah (1:1-4:16)
2. The proclamation of Jesus Messiah (4:17-16:20)
3. The suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Messiah (16:21-28:20)

His literary cues are the repetition at the beginning of each of these divisions, "From that time on Jesus began to preach [to show his disciples]..." (4:17; 16:21). As he says, "each time this formula occurs, it introduces a new phase in the ministry of Jesus."⁶³ And again he observes, "Matthew tells the story of the life of Jesus first by presenting him to the implied reader and then by describing, respectively, his public

⁶¹ Ibid., 111.

⁶² Kingsbury, *Matthew: Structure*, 38.

⁶³ Ibid., 38.

ministry to Israel and his journey to Jerusalem where he suffers, dies, and is raised.”⁶⁴

This analysis shows the MTSP writing technique.

Craig L. Bloomberg basically follows Kingsbury’s structure. He divides the gospel into three sections: (1) Introduction (1:1-4:16), (2) Development (4:17-16:20), (3) Climax (16:21-28:20).⁶⁵ He also observes the progressive arrangement in these three divisions.⁶⁶

All the episodes of 1:1-4:16 present events prior to the actual beginning of Christ’s ministry; with 4:17 his great Galilean ministry gets underway. From 4:17-16:20 Jesus teaches and preaches, heals and works miracles, gains increasing popularity and arouse growing animosity, and consistently forces people to raise the question of his identity, which is climactically and correctly answered by Simon Peter in 16:13-20. But despite the lack of scene change, the tone and content of 16:21-28 could scarcely introduce a more abrupt about-face. From this passage through the end of the Gospel all attention is centered on the road to the cross, with its glorious sequel, the resurrection.

Douglas R. A. Hare also analyzes the gospel into three divisions, but his structure is different from that of Kingsbury as seen below.

Part One. Who is Jesus? (1:1-4:11)

Part Two. The Messiah’s Ministry to Israel (4:12-16:12)

Part Three. The Messiah’s Obedient Submission to Death (16:13-28:20)

Hare holds that Matthew does not neglect ‘the Markan storyline’, but is dependent upon it. This also explains why he is not persuaded by Bacon’s theory that Matthew’s gospel is a new Pentateuch, or that a chiastic structure best represents the heart of Matthew’s message. For him, Matthew’s main point in the gospel structure is that “the narrative of

⁶⁴ Ibid., 38.

⁶⁵ Craig L. Bloomberg, *Matthew* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Prss, 1992), 19; 24.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 24.

Peter's confession and the subsequent passion announcement together constitute the basic turning point or 'hinge' in Matthew just as they do in Mark."⁶⁷ So Hare sees the gospel of Matthew as demonstrating three progressive movements, the climax, occurring at the end, of course.

Matthew's Gospel as Two Cycles of Three Stage Progression

Some scholars analyses the gospel as having two cycles of three step progressions. For example, Michael Green holds for the following structure;⁶⁸

The MTSP Structure of the Gospel of Matthew

Part I: In Galilee (Mt 1-13)

- A. Beginning (1-7)
- B. Discipleship (8-10)
- C. Response (11-13)

Part II: To Jerusalem (Mt 14-28)

- A. Shadows (14-18)
- B. Judgment (19-25)
- C. Finale (26-28)

Green observes a symmetrical structure in the Gospel. His main point in analysis of the gospel is chapter 13, which he thinks is the hinge on which the gospel turns. If Kingsbury or Bloomberg observe two hinges (4:17; 16:21), Green notices only one (13:57).⁶⁹

The main division of the Gospel comes at 13:57. Part I is enacted in Galilee, Part II in Judea. This verse summarizes Part I and points forward to Part II. Thus the rejection of Jesus in Galilee prepares us for a greater rejection in Jerusalem, as Israel turns her back on her rightful king. But although a prophet is rejected, often enough, in his own country, he is frequently accepted outside, and this prepares us for the fact that the cross

⁶⁷ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁸ Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 7-8; 30-36.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 33-34.

and resurrection begin to forge a new people of God among the Gentiles. There is thus a superb symmetry between the rejection that concludes Part I and the vindication that brings Part II to an end.

While Green focuses on the center sections according to the chiastic characteristics, we can observe the progressive arrangement in his analysis. The first half of the Gospel has a naturally flowing story line. Section A prepares Section B by setting Jesus in the context of God's redemptive works in Israel history. Section B demonstrates the beginning of Jesus' public ministry of preaching, teaching and healing, while asking his followers a costly discipleship. Section C naturally follows Section B by showing the discipleship challenged by Israel, especially by the Pharisees. This first cycle of MTSP shows a progressive arrangement in three divisions.

The second half of the Gospel also shows the progressive arrangement in three divisions. Section A is all about the future for the Israel, for the world, and for the immediate future of Jesus. This leads to Section B, which focuses on judgment. This judgment starts with relatively less significant issues such as divorce, marriage, and wealth, but increasingly ends with the predictions of the end. Section C is about new beginning. The events after Section B lead up to the resurrection of Jesus, and Jesus replaces the Gospel at the end.

In the case of Eduard Schweizer, he divides the Gospel of Matthew into six sections. While he does not clearly separate the gospel into two cycles of sections like Green, his analysis shows two cycles of MTSP structures. His structure of the gospel may be modified as follows;⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News According to Matthew*. trans. by David E. Green (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), 5-10.

(1st Cycle of MTSP)

I. The Coming of Jesus (1:1-4:16)

II. The Messiah: His Message, Ministry, and Disciples (4:17-11:30)

III. Jesus Confronts His Opponents (12:1-16:12)

(2nd Cycle of MTSP)

IV. The Road to the Passion (16:13-20:34)

V. The Days in Jerusalem (21:1-25:46)

VI. The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus (26:1-28:20)

Schwiezer's analysis can be interpreted from the viewpoint of MTSP. If the first cycle is focused on Jesus' ministry in Galilee, the second cycle is centered on Jesus' passion and resurrection in Jerusalem. In addition, each cycle is divided into three divisions, which are arranged progressively according to the development of the storyline.

Ulrich Luz also shows an analysis very similar to Schweizer's in spite of some differences in wording each section's theme and in dividing sections (4:17-21; 16:13-20). These differences can be neglected without any serious misunderstanding. The confession of Peter could be the conclusion of Jesus' ministry in Galilee or a new phase in Jesus' ministry. Luz supports the former idea, and his second cycle begins with Jesus' teaching of his suffering.⁷¹

(1st Cycle of MTSP)

I. Prelude (1:1-4:22)

II. Jesus' activity in Israel in Word and Deed (4:23-11:30)

III. Jesus withdraws from Israel (12:1-16:20)

(2nd Cycle of MTSP)

IV. Jesus' Activity in the Church (16:21-20:34)

V. Jesus in Jerusalem (21:1-25:46)

VI. Passion and Easter (26:1-28:20)

Luz understands the gospel of Matthew as a story of conflict between Jesus (the Son of

⁷¹ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 1-7* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 5-12.

God) and the Jewish leaders (Pharisees).⁷² This conflict becomes clear after the confession of Peter: the disciple groups vs. Israel. Therefore, the gospel can be divided into two sections as a whole after the confession of Peter. This confession brings a new phase in Jesus' ministry: prediction of his suffering (i.e., severe conflict). If the first cycle is about Jesus' ministry over Israel, the second half is about conflict and results in Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. Therefore, these two cycles also can be explained from the viewpoint of MTSP.

Conclusion

As we have shown, important Matthean scholars have recognized a three stage progression in Matthew's compositions, in his structuring of smaller forms, narratives, sections of the gospel and even in the overall gospel structure. Certainly all of them have recognized the triads that are everywhere visible in Matthew's organization.

As we move to the next part of the chapter we only wish to observe that when it comes to structuring sections of material, scholars cannot explain why Matthew has done so, except in the most obvious cases of the steps in Jesus' own life, passion, death and resurrection. Even D. A. Allison, the scholar who has written more about the triads in the Gospel of Matthew than any other scholars, could not clearly explain why Matthew chose to arrange his material in threes.⁷³ In the case of Albright, he emphasized the mnemonic

⁷² Ibid., 11.

⁷³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, "We have not been able to detect theological meaning in Matthew's compositional habit. That, however, is not the last word. We do have some idea why he arranged his material as he did. Jesus, it appears, liked threefold structures. So did the author of the pre-Markan passion narrative, and Mark himself. The triad is also a conspicuous feature of *m. 'Abot* 1, a chapter which purports to pass on in pithy summaries the wisdom of ancient teachers."

function of triads.⁷⁴ But his explanation seems less persuasive when we apply this supposed function to concrete texts, especially to long passages.

With respect to the miracle chapters 8-9, the outline of Matthew's gospel narratives by Davies and Allison explain why testing for progressive narrative structure there has not been done. There the miracles are relegated to 'narratives in triad' and not considered as possibly ordered to support a progression. Since Matthew is known to structure for progression, and by prominent scholars, there is no reason not to suppose that for the miracles of Jesus, he would not select the miracle stories to support an ever growing message to find its climax at the conclusion.

MTSP as a New Tool

As we have observed some possible examples of the MTSP writing technique in the ancient texts, in the Hellenistic Jewish writings, and in the Biblical writings, those examples suggest some patterns which help us distinguish it from other writing techniques in the concrete texts.

(1) Observation One: There must be always three divisions in a MTSP structure.

This observation has a close relationship with the popularity of the number three, as we have already seen in the excursus. The reason that threeness was used widely in the ancient times, especially in the Hellenistic Jewish literature seems its symbolism and effectiveness.⁷⁵ According to Aristotle, "a magnitude if divisible one way is a line, if two ways a surface, and if three a body. Beyond these there is no other magnitude, because

⁷⁴ W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann, *Matthew: Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. AB (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971), 97.

⁷⁵ Gerhard Dellling, "τρεῖς, τρίς, τρίτος," in *TDNT* (ed. Gerhard Friedrich; Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. VIII, 217.

the three dimensions are all that there are, and that which is divisible in three directions is divisible in all.”⁷⁶ Therefore body alone can be complete, because it alone is determined by the three dimensions.

In the same way, a story, when narrated in a three-division structure, gives readers the feeling of completeness or fullness that there is no need for any more simplification or interpolation. On the contrary, two or four divisions will bring the feeling of contrast or diversity respectively. Therefore, three gives a feeling of a fully-organized structure with simplicity and strength. This structure is a helpful tool in systematizing a story or event. By dividing a story unit into three, this structure gives the feeling of systematization to the story. This may be related with the human being’s tendency of systematization through threeness.⁷⁷ Of course, three sometimes gives other feelings such as harmony, comprehensiveness, impressiveness, etc.⁷⁸ While all these feelings could be customary or psychological, it can be a really useful tool in human mental life. Therefore, it is not strange that we meet really many examples of threeness, whether West or East.⁷⁹

(2) Observation Two: The three divisions should be arranged progressively.

This rule gives velocity to Observation One. If the first observation emphasizes the feeling of completeness or fullness through threeness, Observation Two adds the

⁷⁶ Aristotle, *De Caelo*, trans. J. L. Stocks (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922). Book I, 268a, lines 5-15.

⁷⁷ Delling, “τρεῖς,” 216, footnote 1.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 216-225.

⁷⁹ For more reference, see “Threefoldness in the Teaching of Jesus,” *ExpTim.* 75 (1964), 228-330; Delling, “τρεῖς,” 216-225; Davies & Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, pp.58-72; Wesley G. Olmstead, *Matthew’s Trilogy of Parables: The Nation, the Nations and the Reader in Matthew 21:28-22:14* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33-39.

feeling of logical or emotional escalation through three stages. Each division in a MTSP structure has its own role in the arrangement of the three stages: the beginning, the middle and the end. These three divisions gather together to form a complete single message of a MTSP structure, but they are not same in their roles. This escalated arrangement of the three divisions should be logical in location.

The effect of these three processes in literature is clear: escalation in tension. This is why Observation Two is very effective in narrating a story; the escalating arrangement of three divisions gives a dramatic effect to the story. The first division introduces a theme that will prevail at the MTSP structure, and the second division develops the theme into the stage of middle, and finally the third division put the theme into the highest state or conclusion ready to turn the story into a new stage. There is no space for interpolation or idle section for omission in the MTSP structure. Therefore, the MTSP structure is complete in theme and dramatic in arrangement.

(3) Observation Three: The three divisions are not always same in amount.

MTSP should have three divisions, but this does not mean that the three units should always be same in amount. Sometimes one division could be shorter or longer than other two divisions, according to the necessity of the author. Of course, this does not mean that the unbalanced division need not follow the logical development or the escalation of tension. Basically we should be able to see two factors in the structure of the three divisions: three divisions and progressive arrangement of them.

(4) Observation Four: The MTSP structure can happen in a sentence, paragraph, unit(s), or whole story.

While it is true that MTSP works very effectively in the narrative structure of a

story, this structure does not always happen in a big unit of a story; sometimes, it can happen in a sentence or a short passage. However, if a MTSP passage is short, there is normally no addition of introduction or summary at the beginning or end or between the tripartite divisions.

In sum, we may define MTSP as follows: it consists of three divisions and the three divisions are arranged according to the order of logical development or emotional escalation in order to give a complete development of a unit, whether it is a sentence, paragraph, unit, or whole story. Sometimes some different factors are added at the beginning, middle or end. MTSP is a rhetorical technique that emphasizes the logical development and escalation in tension.

There will be far more evidence in Matthew if carefully read them from the viewpoint of MTSP. But with the above examples, it seems enough to prove the existence of the MTSP writing technique or at least the possibility of its existence. Here we conclude that MTSP was used widely in the Matthean texts. Upon this reposition, we are going to analyze Matthew 8-9 from the viewpoint of Matthew's Three-Stage Progression.

Matthew's Three Stage Progression in Mt 8-9

Introduction

Thus far in the discussion of the gospel, we have seen that the evangelist Matthew shows by his redaction and structuring that he is well aware of the narrative organizational technique we term, MTSP, that is, the arrangement of literary units so that there is a gradual progression with the third element functioning as a climax. Now we turn to the question of the arrangement of the miracle stories in Matthew 8-9. As we

shall illustrate below, the three clusters of miracle stories (8:2-17; 8:23-9:8; 9:18-34) gradually reveal a greater and greater identity for Jesus to the listener. By the conclusion of Chapter 9, the listener understands Jesus as Christ and the Son of God with a divine authority and power that goes beyond his own ability. He heals all diseases and cast out all unclean spirits as Christ, and has divine authority over the nature and human sins as the Son of God. In addition, Jesus is not simply a miracle performer; it is clear that Jesus has the power and authority to bestow these gifts of healing diseases and casting out all unclean spirits on his disciples, who will go out into the 'harvest' as laborers for the kingdom to heal and cast out demons through their empowerment by Jesus. All these news about Jesus are spreading more and more throughout that region: "News about him spread all over Syria (4:24)." Matthew 8-9, along with Matthew 5-7, is the concrete contents of the inclusio, 4:23-24 and 9:35.

Preliminary Considerations

The structure of Matthew 8-9 has been very controversial among scholars, and there is no unanimous understanding of the structure.⁸⁰ However, if we apply the MTSP writing technique to the analysis of Matthew 8-9, it is not difficult to explain the structure and the author's intentions. Before we analyze Matthew 8-9 from the viewpoint of MTSP, there are some points that should be articulated.

Three Clusters of Nine Miracle Stories

One salient feature of Matthew 8-9 is that the nine miracle stories are divided into

⁸⁰ See Chapter One: Introduction and Chapter Two: History of Research.

three clusters as they are.⁸¹ Unfortunately the relationship between the three clusters of the miracle stories has never been persuasively articulated. As already seen above in Chapter Two, some scholars simply have mentioned triadic structures in Matthew 8-9, and they have not explained why the author used a triadic structure in the concrete context.⁸² It is not persuasive and desirable to insist that the nine miracle stories are arranged randomly in three divisions because of the author's favor of threeness. If it is to be persuasive, a literary explanation should be followed by theological explanation.⁸³ If we compare characteristics of these three clusters, we can have some important clues for the intention of the threefold arrangement. As we will demonstrate below, these three clusters show the MTSP writing technique of arranging progressively the nine miracle stories in three clusters.

This understanding enables us to answer such questions as why Matthew collected nine miracle stories in one place, why he creatively changed the Markan order, why he abbreviated the miracle stories of Mark so much and used doublets twice in the gospel (9:27-31 and 20:29-34; 9:32-34 and 12:22-24), etc as we asked in Chapter One

⁸¹ Some scholars observe three triads with two buffers at the structure of Matt 8-9. For example, Meier divides Matt 8-9 as follows:

- A. The first trio of miracle stories (8:1-17);
- The first buffer pericope (8:18-8:22);
- B. The second trio of miracle stories (8:23-9:8);
- The second buffer pericope (9:9-9:17);
- C. The third trio of miracle stories (9:18-9:34).

See Meier, *Vision*, 68-73. Among them are Davies & Allison (*Matthew 1-7*, 67), Elaine A. Wainwright ("The Matthean Jesus and the Healing of Women," in *Gospel of Matthew in Current Studies*, ed. David E. Aune [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], 82); Gaechter, *Das Matthaus Evangelium*, 260-61.

⁸² See Chapter One: Introduction.

⁸³ Stewart-Sykes, "Matthew's Miracle Chapters," 56-57.

Introduction.⁸⁴ For example, the MTSP writing technique explains why each individual setting of the nine miracle stories does not matter to Matthew. This point is proven by the fact that the whole time range of Mt 8-9 is only two days. It is very artificial to narrate nine miracle stories as occurring within two days; after Matthew 8-9, the miracle stories become sporadic and the intervals between the miracle stories become relatively longer (12:9-14; 12:22-24; 14:15-21; 14:22-33; 15:21-28; 15:29-39; 17:1-13; 17:14-21; 20:29-34). This collection of nine miracle stories which are abbreviated in the time range and in the narrative amount does not strengthen historicity of Jesus' miracle stories as much as the parallel miracle stories of Mark do.⁸⁵ If the author had thought that each miracle story's historicity was important, he would not have abbreviated all these nine miracle stories into such a short span of time of two days, into such a simplified settings and into such a narrow space of Matthew 8-9 and would not have used two miracle stories twice. Matthew's main concern is not historicity or vividness of the miracle stories but a certain message (i.e., theme) common to each cluster.

Here finding out the main theme common in each cluster is the key to understanding the structure of Matthew 8-9 and the author's intention (i.e., theology). Clearly the intention of Matthew can be found better in the wider structure of three clusters of nine miracle stories than in the narrow structure of each individual miracle story as the thematic approaches have done. If three miracle stories of each cluster are compared carefully as we will do below, we can observe that three clusters contribute to

⁸⁴ Those questions will be answered later in the related sections.

⁸⁵ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 2-3. He also says that "Matthew is not a realistic and precise narrator" with some examples of awkward writings. See his book, *Matthew 8-20*, p.1-2. Thus, Matthew is telling 'a theological story of Jesus' through a succession of nine miracle stories rather than a biography of Jesus.

the development of a certain theme in the storyline. This is why finding the common theme of each cluster is the most important factor in understanding Matthew 8-9 (i.e., in finding the intention of the author). This is the key point of this dissertation and will be discussed in detail below.

Two Intervening Narrative Sets of Pericopae

Certainly as we discuss the placement of the miracle sets in Chapters 8-9, it will be necessary to discuss and explain the function of those intervening narratives.⁸⁶ The treatment of the chapters has to be as inclusive as the evangelist organized them. Let us recall here that isolating the three sets of miracle stories away from these intervening narratives, or connecting narratives, deprives the interpretation of their controls,⁸⁷ for surely, just as the evangelist selected the order of the miracle stories with purpose, so too he selected those pericopae which would follow one set and precede the next. Scholars seemed to have regarded these narratives as only functioning to separate the clusters, and so discussion of them has not featured in the analysis of the placement of the miracle stories in relation to each other, in sets and the relationship of the sets to the context.⁸⁸ Thus the role of the two sets of intervening narratives in Matthew 8-9 cannot be bypassed. In the dissertation their function will be made clear.

⁸⁶ Meier seems the first person who uses the word 'buffer.' See his commentary, *Matthew* (Wilmington, DL: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1980), 80. Wainwright (*Towards A Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, 80) and Davies & Allison (*Matthew 8-18*, 6) also use this terminology.

⁸⁷ See the thematic approaches in Chapter Two: History of Research of this dissertation, pp.16-48.

⁸⁸ Davies and Allison call the buffer as 'boundary marker,' which explains its function in the nine miracle collection. This marker has the same function with the buffer in the structure of Matthew 8-9. See their book, *Matthew 8-18*, 6.

The Structure of Matthew 8-9

Through the preliminary considerations, we can appreciate the structural importance of three clusters of nine miracle stories with two intervening pericopae in understanding Matthew 8-9. In this dissertation, we will use the following structure which is modified from the structure supported by other scholars such as Meier, Davies and Allison, Wainwright, etc.⁸⁹

The MTSP Structure of Matthew 8-9

I. The First Cluster (Matthew 8:2-17): “Jesus, the Merciful Healing Messiah”

- A. The Healing of the Leper (Matt 8:1-4)
- B. The Healing of the Centurion’s Servant (Matt 8:5-13)
- C. The Healing of Peter’s Mother-in-Law (Matt 8:14- 15)
- * Conclusion: Matt 8:16-17

- * The First Intervening Pericopae (8:18-22): The Costs of Discipleship
 - a. The Son of Man has no place to lay his head (8:18-20)
 - b. Let the Dead bury their own dead (8:21-22)

II. The Second Cluster (Matthew 8:23-9:8): “Jesus, the Divine Being”

- A. The Calming of the Storm (Matt 8:23-27)
- B. The Healing of Demoniacs (Matt 8:28-34)
- C. The Healing of the Paralytic (Matt 9:1-8)

- * The Second Intervening Pericopae (9:9-13): Unconventional Jesus as Master of Discipleship
 - a. I have come to call sinners (9:9-13)
 - b. New wine into new wineskins (9:14-17)

III. The Third Cluster (Matthew 9:18-34): “The Spread of Jesus’ Fame”

- A. A Daughter and A Woman (Matt 9:18-26)
- B. The Healing of Two Blind Men (Matt 9:27-31)
- C. The Healing of a Demoniac who was Mute (Matt 9:32-34)

⁸⁹ The modified parts are 8:1 and 9:35. While all of them include 8:1 as the beginning of the first division, the first miracle story begins at 8:2. Davies and Allison (*Matthew* 8-18, 143-150) analyze 9:35-38 as the beginning of the missionary task in Chapter 10, and Meier (*Matthew*, 79-101) and Wainwright (*Toward a Feminist Reading*, 80-82) describe 9:35-38 as ‘the third buffer’. Because those explanations are different from my understanding as I will explain later, I am modifying this section (9:35) as the conclusion of the nine miracle stories.

* Conclusion of Matthew 8-9 (9:35)

Using this MTSP structure, we will analyze the three clusters of Matthew 8-9 to find out their relationship. After examining each cluster's common theme and MTSP structure of each cluster, we will synthesize how the three clusters make a MTSP structure and what Matthew intends in Matthew 8-9.

CHAPTER FOUR

MTSP IN THE FIRST CLUSTER

The Main Theme

As it is generally accepted, the theme of the first cluster of Matthew 8-9 is relatively easy to establish since the evangelist supplies it as its conclusion (8:16-17): Jesus, the Merciful Healing Messiah. Matthew 8:2-17 describes three typical healing stories of Jesus as the promised Messiah.¹ For example, Held comments;²

In the composition of Matt. 8:2-17 Matthew proves himself to be an outstanding systematiser. It presents itself as a well-thought-out whole. After three individual examples there follows a generalizing summary of the miraculous activity of Jesus, the theological interpretation of which is stated at the close.

Held observes Matthew's conclusion (i.e., theological interpretation) of the three miracle stories of the first cluster in the summary (8:16-17). Depending on this conclusion, we can say that this first cluster consists of three representing healing stories that are supposed to be performed by the messianic agent: "He took up our infirmities (ἀσθενεία) and carried our diseases (νόσος) (8:17)." It is generally agreed that this verse was quoted from Isa 53:4,³ but the author of Matthew does not render the text exactly same with the

¹ Among them are Held, "Matthew as Interpreter of Miracle Stories," 254; Davies and Allison, 35-38; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 13-14; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 207-11; L. Morris, *Matthew*, 196-99; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 144-45; D. L. Turner, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 234-37; Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 310; Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word: Meditation on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 343; Meier, *Matthew*, 85.

² Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 254.

OT. If the suffering in Isa 53:4 is the servant's vicarious and mental one, the suffering in Mt 8:17 is Israel's physical one which will be removed by the messianic agent. What is important here is that the author interprets that healing diseases is the role of the messianic agent.⁴ While Jesus is supposed to fulfill two things (taking up our infirmities and carrying our diseases) as the promised Messiah, the difference between 'infirmity' and 'disease' is not clear. It seems correct to say that they are synonymous rather than of two different categories.⁵ Jesus heals all kinds of diseases as the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Jesus' authority as the healing Messiah is proven by Matthew's redaction of the Markan text that 'many (πολλοί)' were brought to Jesus and he healed 'all (πάντας)' of them (8:16). The Markan text gives the impression that Jesus could not heal some diseases by saying that 'the whole town (ὅλη ἡ πόλις)' gathered and Jesus healed 'many (πολλούς) diseases' and drove out 'many demons (δαίμονια πολλὰ)' in Mark 1:34. But the Matthean text declares Jesus' authority over all diseases by describing Jesus to heal 'all diseases (πάντας)'.⁶ To the author of Matthew, there is no disease that Jesus cannot heal. Healing all diseases is one important role of the messianic agent along with teaching and preaching.

³ Among them are Blomberg, *Matthew*, 144; D. L. Turner, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 235; Morris, *Matthew*, 198; D. J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 117; Davies And Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 37; J. Nolland, *Matthew*, 361; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 210; D. Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 117.

⁴ Gundry comments that "Matthew translates independently in order to make the quotation apply to physical maladies cured by Jesus." See his book, *Matthew*, 150.

⁵ Hagner, *Matthew*, 210.

⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 149; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 210; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 36; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 14; Morris, *Matthew*, 198.

However, Jesus' healing activity is not a stereotyped one. Jesus heals not only with full authority but also with mercy. Matthew identifies Jesus as the suffering servant in Isa 52:13-53:12.⁷ The suffering servant carries Israel' physical infirmities caused by sins through his suffering and death. Likewise, Jesus' healing in Matthew is related with forgiveness of sins (Matt 9:1-8), and that corresponds with the purpose of Jesus' coming (Matt 1:21).⁸ Healing is Jesus' redemptive activity, which will be completed through his death on the cross. The completion will bring forgiveness of sins (26:28) and therefore end of infirmities.⁹ Jesus' redemptive activity is based upon mercy.

By associating the servant motif with the ministry of miracles, Matthew shows us that Jesus' healings are 'to be understood as a work of his obedience and his humiliation. The miracles flow from Jesus' meekness and mercy; his task is not grand or glorious or in any way self-serving. Rather, his portion is with lepers and demoniacs, and he identifies himself with humanity in its suffering.'¹⁰

Thus, when Jesus heals every disease he encounters with, mercy is at the basis of his healing ministry. The first cluster illustrates Jesus' merciful healing. In the first miracle story, Jesus touches a leper out of mercy, even though it is unnecessary for the healing. Jesus puts mercy over the law. Clean or Unclean is not so important to Jesus as mercy. In the second story, Jesus' mercy is not limited to the Jews. Jesus is willing to visit a centurion's house to heal his servant out of mercy. Although a centurion is not welcomed to Israel as a member of the conquest forces, Jesus is not hesitant in helping

⁷ Matthew quotes frequently the songs of the suffering servant: 27:12 (Isa 53:7), 27:57 (Isa 53:9), 20:28 (Isa 53:10-12). This shows that Matthew has a deep understanding of the song.

⁸ Carson, "Matthew," 206.

⁹ Morris, *Matthew*, 199.

¹⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 38.

him. In the third story, Jesus heals a marginalized woman in a bed, although healing is not requested. Jesus' mercy does not require any eager request or pre-condition. He feels compassion to everyone, whether marginalized or not. All those examples demonstrate Jesus as the merciful healing Messiah.¹¹

This first cluster holds an important place in the gospel, since it directly follows on the first major speech of the Matthean gospel: The Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7). Here Matthew has taken pains to redact the material of his sources to make it plain that Jesus is a faithful Jew, and that "until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matt 5:17b). It is significant then that the evangelist has moved Mark's story of the healing of the leper from its position as the third miracle of that gospel (1:40-45), into the first place, so that the first miracle of Jesus' public life is to touch a leper (Matt 8:1-4); the second, to extend to a centurion, a Gentile, a member of the occupational forces, in a life that has a reputation as anything but pure (Matt 8: 5-13); the third, to a small, quiet and private miracle, far away from crowds, and extended to an old feverish woman. Thus this first cluster of miracles shows that Jesus meets with people in need with attention to their own misery, and despite his very devout adherence to the Torah, places mercy ahead of observance and certainly ahead of any public esteem. The evangelist makes this point, and shows Jesus as the merciful and healing Messiah in the summary to this collection, and its interpretation, as we shall see:

¹¹ Jesus also requires mercy from his disciples. When Jesus gives the authority to heal diseases and cast out the demons to his disciples, he orders his disciples not to receive any thing as the reward of healing (10:8).

Matthew 8:17-18: That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases” [Isa 53:4].¹²

The First Cluster (8:1-17): “Jesus, the Merciful Healing Messiah”

The author does not simply arrange the three miracle stories of the first cluster in random to emphasize Jesus’ mercy as the healing Messiah. Through the progressive arrangement of the three miracle stories, the author maximizes the effect of dramatizing Jesus’ mercy. In this cluster, we will examine how the common theme of mercy is arranged progressively in the first three miracle stories.

The First Stage: Mercy over the Law in Matthew 8:1-4

¹Καταβάντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί. ²καὶ ἰδοὺ λεπρὸς προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγων, Κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαι με καθαρίσαι. ³καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἥψατο αὐτοῦ λέγων, Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι· καὶ εὐθέως ἐκαθαρίσθη αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα. ⁴καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ὅρα μηδενὶ εἴπῃς, ἀλλὰ ὑπαγε σεαυτὸν δεῖξον τῷ ἱερεὶ καὶ προσένεγκον τὸ δῶρον ὃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς, εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς.

¹ *When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him;* ² *and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.”* ³ *He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I do choose. Be made clean!” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.* ⁴ *Then Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”*

Introduction

Through the first miracle story, the author emphasizes Jesus’ faithfulness to the law by ordering the leper to offer the gifts Moses ordered (8:4).¹³ This story is closely

¹² In this dissertation I will use NRSV as the English version.

¹³ Nolland, *Matthew*, 350; Albright and Mann, *Matthew*, 92; Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 302; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 139.

related with Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, especially with 5:17-20, which describes that Jesus has not come to abolish the Law or the prophets but to fulfill them. Those who listened to Jesus' purpose to come on the mount now have the idea that anyone who breaks one of the least of the law is not welcomed in the kingdom of the heaven (5:19), and they witness how Jesus himself is faithful to the law through the example of the leper: "See that you do not tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them (8:4)." Because of this connectivity to the Sermon on the Mount, this story has its proper place as the first story of the miracle chapters, following directly the Sermon on the Mount.¹⁴

However, Jesus does not simply stick to the law. To him, mercy is more important than the law. Jesus does not hesitate to touch the leper, even though it makes Jesus ritually unclean. His touch is not out of necessity, but strictly out of mercy. This helps listeners remember that mercy takes the primary place in Jesus' messianic mission.¹⁵ This illustrates that Jesus puts mercy over the law.¹⁶

As the first miracle story after the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), this story plays some important roles. This story illustrates how Jesus puts mercy over the laws.

Transition

Mt 8:1 ἸΚαταβάντος δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοί (*When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him*).

¹⁴ Gundry, *Matthew*, 138.

¹⁵ Matthew omits Jesus' compassion ('σπλαγχνισθεῖς') in Mark 1:41. While this weakens the theme of Jesus' mercy, this omission seems to be caused by the original text which probably has a reference to anger rather than compassion. Some representatives of the Western family have 'οργισθεῖς' not σπλαγχνισθεῖς. This expression does not fit with Matthew's tendency to describe Jesus' perfect character.

¹⁶ The story of healing a leper will be analyzed in detail later in the below.

The author shows that Jesus finishes one side of his ministry by descending the mountain, which he ascended for teaching at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount (5:1).¹⁷ Now the story is turning to a new stage in which Jesus will demonstrate another side of his ministry: healing as the author already prescribed in 4:23. The same crowd who listened to Jesus' teaching will soon witness his miraculous deeds in the following two chapters. In this sense, this verse is a transition from Jesus' sayings to Jesus' deeds rather than a setting for the first miracle story.¹⁸ Now that Jesus has demonstrated his authority over teaching to the surprise of the crowds, he will show his authority of healing 'every disease and sickness (πᾶσαν νόσον καὶ πᾶσαν μαλακίαν)' as in 4:23.¹⁹

The 'large crowd (ὄχλοι πολλοί)' follows Jesus when he comes down from the mountain. The phrase 'large crowd' is always used in favor of Jesus in the Matthean

¹⁷ Some scholars such as Davies and Allison (*Matthew 8-18*, 9); Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word: Meditations on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, Vol. 1 (Chapters 1-11) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 321-22; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 5; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 198; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 9; Turner, *Matthew*, 230; Herman Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories (San Francisco: Harper & row, 1987)*, 96 observe a parallel between Moses' Sinai and the mount of Jesus' sermon. But it is difficult to say whether it is accidental or on purpose because the parallel is lacking of continuity. Matthew 8-9 and the following chapters do not continuously show any clear parallels between Jesus and Moses. The number of miracles is also better counted as nine rather than ten, as explained above.

¹⁸ See Evert-Jan Vledder, *Conflict in the Miracle Stories: A Socio-Exegetical Study of Matthew 8 and 9* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 173-74; J. D. Kingsbury, "The Miracle of the Cleansing of the Leper as an Approach to the Theology of Matthew," in *CTM* 4 (1977), 344-45. The first miracle story starts with 'look (ἰδοὺ),' which is a characteristic expression of Matthew for a new situation in which something important will happen. See below.

¹⁹ Jesus' healing miracles are sometimes performed without the requests or faiths of the recipients, as shown in the examples of the healing story of Peter's mother-in-law (8:14-15) and the healing story of a demoniac (9:32-34). Because Jesus has compassion to the crowd as if they were sheep harassed and helpless without a shepherd (9:35) and takes our infirmities and carries our diseases (8:17), Jesus heals every disease he encounters without any condition.

context (4:25; 8:1; 8:18; 13:2; 15:30).²⁰ Here Matthew creates a faithful audience for the healing miracles (8:1, 18; 9:8, 23, 25, 33), and here then the same crowds that heard his sermon, now see how mercy takes precedence. They do not just follow Jesus, but remain positive to Jesus' miracles during the miracle chapters. The multitude of the crowds shows the popularity of Jesus' teaching and makes Jesus the focal point of the following story.²¹ Because they are amazed at Jesus' teaching, they begin to follow Jesus (4:25).

Jesus' Encounter of a Leper

Mt 8:2: ²καὶ ἰδοὺ λεπρὸς προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγων, Κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι αὐτὸν ἰδοὺ λεπρὸς προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγων, Κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι (and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean").

Mk 1:40 Καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρὸς παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν [καὶ γονυπετῶν] καὶ λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι Ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι. (A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean.")

The healing story of a leper begins with 'look (ἰδοὺ),' a common custom of Matthew's writing tool turning our attention directly to the next topic without any introductory details.²² Of course, the important thing that is going to happen is the encounter of Jesus with the leper. Unlike Mark, the leper shows respect and homage to Jesus from the beginning.

Comparison of Mark and Matthew

²⁰ Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 96. Sjeff van Tilborg analyzes the positive usage of 'the crowds (οἱ ὄχλοι)' from three relationships of the crowds with the Jewish leaders, the disciples and Jesus. See his book, *Jewish Leaders in Matthew* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972), 142-165.

²¹ This popularity may suggest the beginning of conflict between Jesus and Israel leaders by expressing Jesus as having more authority and therefore more listeners than the scribes. See Vledder, *Conflict*, 174.

²² Gundry, *Matthew*, 139; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 10; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 18; Morris, *Matthew*, 188; Kingsbury, "The Miracle of Cleansing," 345; Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 96.

Mark 1:40 Καὶ ἔρχεται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρὸς παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν [καὶ γονυπετῶν] καὶ λέγων αὐτῷ

Matthew 8:2 καὶ ἰδοὺ λεπρὸς προσελθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγων,

First, the threefold repetition of πρὸς in this verse (προσελθὼν - προσεκύνει - αὐτῷ) emphasizes the attraction which Jesus showed in the Sermon on the Mount.²³ Jesus gave confidence to the hopeless leper, and Jesus is the only person who can free him from his misery. He has confidence about Jesus' power of curing leprosy, and even the strict prohibition of the Law cannot prevent him from coming close to Jesus within the distance of an arm (cf. Lev 13:45-46). This threefold repetition of 'the close approach to Jesus' is based upon the leper's respect and confidence to Jesus as the messianic agent.

Second, the leper came to prostrate himself (προσκυνεῖν) in front of Jesus. The word 'προσκυνεῖν,' which is a Matthean word meaning 'kneel down before, worship,' is frequently used in the gospel of Matthew.²⁴ While there are different understandings between scholars in translating this word,²⁵ it is clear that this word represents the leper's respect for Jesus. Thus we can say that Matthew judged that the leper should, like other petitioners, prostrate himself in asking for a miracle. The leper already knows that Jesus has the power to heal his leprosy. But he is not sure if Jesus has the will to heal a leper like him. Thus the leper does not make a petition but a confident statement: "Lord, if you

²³ Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 322.

²⁴ For example, among them are 2:2, 8, 11; 4:10; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 18:26; 20:20; 28:9, 17.

²⁵ Among those scholars who like to translate 'kneel down before' are Hagner (*Matthew 1-13*, 198), Luz (*Matthew 8-20*, 5), Blomberg (*Matthew*, 138), Vledder, *Conflict*, 178; those who translate this word as 'worship' are Davies and Allison (*Matthew 8-18*, 10), Gundry (*Matthew*, 139), Hendrickx (*The Miracle Stories*, 97), Kingsbury, "The Miracle of the Cleansing," 345-46; Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 322; Nolland, *Matthew*, 349. The issue is how to interpret the leper's understanding of Jesus: the Messiah in Isa 53:4 or Son of God in Mt 3:17. The leper would not worship the Messiah because he is a human agent; but he would worship Son of God because he has the same authority with God.

are willing, you can make me clean.”

Third, the respect of the leper to Jesus is emphasized again with his calling of Jesus as ‘Lord.’ It is Matthew’s custom to insert this title onto Markan stories where it is absent, as it is absent from this Markan story.²⁶ The leper calls Jesus as ‘Lord,’ presuming the sovereign authority of Jesus: “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean” (8:2). This designation has the same theological problem with ‘προσκυνέω.’ Some scholars understand this calling as the expression of respect (i.e., an honorific address),²⁷ but others go further by interpreting it as the confession of faith to Jesus as the object of worship.²⁸ While it is true that this title “does not appear on the lips of outsiders and is not simply polite speech,”²⁹ the verse “if you will” does not necessarily infer Jesus’ divinity.³⁰ The leper must have been confident about Jesus’ ability to heal his leprosy. But curing leprosy does not necessarily mean deity; some prophets of OT cured leprosy. In this sense, the term “Lord” seems to be used as “a confession of faith in Jesus as God’s messianic agent but not necessarily a belief in Jesus’ deity.”³¹ While Jesus also does not ascribe the miracle to God but to his own authority in the next verse, the context does not clearly mention Jesus’ deity. Then, it seems exaggeration to say that the leper thinks

²⁶ Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle stories*, 32, footnote 35.

²⁷ Vledder, *Conflict*, 178; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 198; Patte, *Matthew*, 113; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 138.

²⁸ Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 323; Kingsbury, “The Miracle of the Cleansing,” 346; Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 97; Nolland, *Matthew*, 349; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 5-6; France, *Matthew*, 152; Gundry, *Matthew*, 139.

²⁹ Luz, *Matthew 8-18*, 6.

³⁰ The second cluster describes Jesus as deity. We will explain this in detail later at the related section.

³¹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 198.

Jesus divine. This expression anticipates Jesus' deity with clearer description in the next cluster of three miracles.³²

Fourth, the leper does not petition; instead, he makes a statement: "If you will, you can make me clean." This is another continuing expression of the leper's faith to Jesus.³³ Many scholars interpret this statement as describing the leper's faith to Jesus' power, but this does not explain enough the other side of this statement: "There might be the ability without the will, or the will without the ability, but his hope was that in Christ there would be the combination of both, and all that was needed for that, in his estimation, was the will."³⁴ This statement is asking Jesus' willingness based upon the faith to his ability.

The Leper's Request of Healing

Mk 1:41-42 ⁴¹καὶ σπλαγχνισθεὶς ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἥψατο καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι· ⁴²καὶ εὐθὺς ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα, καὶ ἐκαθαρίσθη. (⁴¹Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" ⁴²Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.)

Mt 8:3: καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα ἥψατο αὐτοῦ λέγων, Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι· καὶ εὐθέως ἐκαθαρίσθη αὐτοῦ ἡ λέπρα (He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed).

This verse begins with the omission of 'moved with pity (σπλαγχνισθεὶς)' in

³² No human being confesses Jesus' deity before the disciples in 14:33 and Peter in 16:16. Before those confessions, only the demons (8:29) and Jesus himself (9:6) mention Jesus' deity. See below.

³³ Some scholars understand this sentence from the viewpoint of conflict. Kazmierski interprets this as the leper's request to break the social boundaries in order to join the community ("Evangelist and Leper," 45). Vledder also has a similar interpretation. According to Vledder, the leper is turning back to Jesus from the social system which is useless to him (*Conflict*, 178). However, the conflict theory between the social system and Jesus exaggerates the tension caused by Jesus' healing. This theory cannot explain why Jesus also asks the leper to offer the gifts in Lev 14 (Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle stories*, 34), and we cannot find any clear evidence for the conflict yet in the context.

³⁴ William M. Tyler, *The Miracles of Our Saviour* (Grand Rapids, MI; Kregel, 1975), 114.

Mark 1:41. This omission is surprising, because Matthew uses this expression elsewhere (9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34). Some scholars explain this omission from the textual disagreement of Mark 1:41: *σπλαγχνίζομαι* vs. *ὀργισθεῖς*.³⁵ Because Matthew has the tendency of omitting negative expressions about Jesus contrary to Mark, Matthew's source could have contained Jesus' anger rather than pity as seen in Codex Bezae, which is an important witness to Western texts.

Cave lists two reasons for this understanding:³⁶ (1) there is more possibility for *ὀργισθεῖς* to become *σπλαγχνίζομαι* later, and not vice versa, (2) Luke also does not have the word, which supports the originality of *ὀργισθεῖς*. But this does not necessarily mean that "none of the miracles results from the compassion of Jesus except Lk7:11-17."³⁷ This understanding does not support 9:36, which explains why Jesus travels all the regions teaching, preaching and healing: Jesus' compassion for the crowd.

The issue in interpreting Mark 1:41, then, is the answer to what is the object of Jesus' anger. Jesus' anger might be against the priests who would not accept Jesus' authority or against the leper who challenges Jesus' willingness. Whatever the object may be, the author of Matthew omitted the word. But this does not mean that Jesus was not moved with pity. The omission of Jesus' anger shows the author's intention about Jesus' pity as probably "the earliest copyist [of Mark] piously replaced *ὀργισθεῖς* with

³⁵ Gundry, *Matthew*, 139; Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 18; Cyril H. Cave, "The Leper: Mark 1.40-45," in *NTS* 25 (1979), 246; George B. Telford, Jr., "Mark 1:40-45," *Interpretation* 36 (1982), 55.

³⁶ Cave, "The Leper," 246.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

σπλαγχνίζομαι.”³⁸ This pity is more clearly expressed in Jesus’ touching of the leper as we will explain next. At the same time, it would not be missed by anyone that the fact that Jesus could extend his hand and touch the man, shows that the man is so very close and it is shocking (Lev 14:45-46). Yet this did not make Jesus jump back, but rather accept the man and heal him.

In many cases, touching is shown not necessary to Jesus’ healing as seen in the cures of the Centurion’s servant (8:5-13), Peter’s mother-in-law (1:29-31), two demon-possessed men (8:28-34), a paralytic (9:1-8). But Jesus not rarely makes physical contacts with the leper (8:2-4), the hand of Peter’s mother-in-law (8:15), the hand of the dead girl (9:18-26) and the eyes of the two blind men (9:29; 20:34). Of course, we can also see some examples of the patients’ touching of Jesus (Mt 8:15; 9:20-21; 29; 14:36).

Touching of a leper is a violation of the Law, and will cause him unclean according to Lev 5:3. There are three main streams in interpreting this touch: (1) Jesus’ behavior expressing his willingness to help the leper unconditionally back into the community (conflict theory),³⁹ (2) Jesus’ supreme authority over the Law,⁴⁰ and (3) a gesture of healing showing Jesus’ mercy.⁴¹

³⁸ Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 38.

³⁹ Cave, “The Leper: Mark 1.40-45,” 245-250; Vledder, *Conflict*, 173-79.

⁴⁰ Michal Wojciechowski, “The Touching of the Leper (Mark 1.40-45) as a Historical and Symbolic Act of Jesus,” in *BZ* 33 (1989), 118; Carl R. Kazmierski, “Evangelist and Leper: A Socio-Cultural Study of Mark 1:40-45,” in *NTS* 38 (1992), 45; Keith Warrington, *Jesus the Healer: Paradigm or Unique Phenomenon* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2000), 35; Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 74.

⁴¹ Kingsbury, “The Miracle of the Cleansing,” 346-7; Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 95-99; Brunner, *Matthew 1-12*, 299-302.

(1) Conflict theory

The first main interpretation is based upon conflict theory. As they interpret the leper's statement as a 'request for help,' they also interpret Jesus' statement as Jesus' willingness to break the Law and help the leper, even though touch of the leper brings uncleanness to Jesus. Using Waagenvoort's comment that 'the first purpose of the touching was to strengthen the people who were physically or mentally weaker,'⁴² he emphasizes Jesus' unconditional willingness to help the leper come back to his previous community.⁴³

Cave also emphasizes the leper's ritual cleanliness by Jesus' touch. He interprets καθαριζειν as meaning 'to declare clean' rather than 'to heal,' following Johannes Weiss.⁴⁴ Thus he thinks that the leper understands Jesus as a teacher who can declare cleanness of the leper, and Jesus actually cleans the leper according to his request. This cleansing is contrary to the Torah, because Jesus is not a priest. But this is not the case to Cave. He uses Damascus Document and Mishnah Tractate Negaim to show how Jesus can declare the decision. According to him, pronouncement of cleanness is the priest's prerogative, while the inspection of leprosy can be done by other people.⁴⁵ After cleansing the leper, Jesus let him to fulfill the Law by sending him to the priest for declaration. To Cave, this miracle story is the story of Jesus' miraculous cleansing of a leper.

⁴² Cited by G. Theissen, *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Mohn, 1974), 71.

⁴³ Vledder, *Conflict*, 178-79.

⁴⁴ Cave, "The Leper: Mark 1.4-45," 246.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 248.

Vledder also observes Jesus' willingness in Jesus' touch. To him, there are two reasons that Jesus ignores the Law and touches the leper.⁴⁶ First, this healing behavior demonstrates Jesus' power over leprosy. Jesus' ceremonial uncleanness is unthinkable in the context of this passage. Second, Jesus shows his willingness to help the weak unconditionally so that he may return back to his community. Thus his purpose of touching is not only healing the leper but also cleansing him acceptable ritually to the community. While we can observe Jesus' pity in his willingness to 'act on behalf of the leper', Vledder's main concern is Jesus' challenge to the priest system. But it is doubtful if Jesus touched to challenge the priest system.

The problem of this approach is that it focuses mainly on the conflict between Jesus and the priest. Actually this kind of conflict cannot be found until Chapter 11. In this story, Jesus does not take any hostile attitude toward the priest.

(2) Jesus' authority over the law

The second main interpretation focuses on Jesus as a Holy One of God who is free from any uncleanness. It must be a shocking paradox if Jesus himself is defiled by touch, although he let the leper fulfill the Law after healing. Wojciechowski tries to solve this problem by interpreting that touching reveals Jesus as "Holy One of God."⁴⁷

Touching the leper Jesus was conscious of his special holiness and power in the sacral sphere. He was so close to God that his touch could cleanse even the worst impurity. The touching of the leper seems to be a symbolic act, an act of purification and an act revealing Jesus as the "Holy One of God."

The unnecessary behavior of touch actually demonstrates Jesus' divinity as a symbolic

⁴⁶ Vledder, *Conflict*, 178-79.

⁴⁷ Wojciechowski, "The Touching of the Leper," 119.

act because his touch of the leper cannot defile Jesus contrary to the Law (Lev 5:3). If the author thought that the touch can cause Jesus unclean, he would not make Jesus touch the leper in the text. Instead, he thinks that this reveals the author's notion that Jesus' authority is above the Law.

Kazmierski also has a similar interpretation. According to him, touching is "a sign that Jesus is indeed the 'Holy One of God,' who can overcome the unclean spirits."⁴⁸ The leper's request is what Jesus cannot do because he is not a priest. Kazmierski observes Jesus' willingness to 'break the official boundaries' and 'to accept the leper into community' like the first main interpretation as seen above. But he goes further. He also observes a divine character of Jesus when his touching of the leper causes leprosy to leave and therefore makes him clean. To him, Jesus himself is the Holy One of God who cannot be defiled into uncleanness.

Warrington does not perfectly deny the possibility of interpreting Jesus' touching of the leper as his expression of compassion to the leper. But to him, it is more probable that Jesus touches the leper on purpose in order to 'establish his authority.' Leprosy contaminates everyone who makes contact with it. However, Jesus cannot be contaminated because "his status is such that he could re-interpret the Law."⁴⁹ The purpose of Jesus' touching is to allow the leper to join the community again; "Jesus affirms him as a person, empowers him, speaks with him and eventually confirms his faith."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Kazmierski, "Evangelist and Leper," 45.

⁴⁹ Warrington, *Jesus the Healer*, 35.

Guelich also observes Jesus' touching as equivalent to the work of God himself.⁵¹ Because Jesus' healing power through touch is overwhelming, the possibility of leprosy's defilement of Jesus does not matter at all. This overwhelming power is more than the messianic expectation. He supports this notion with the Judaic understanding that "God alone can heal the leper or raise the dead."⁵²

However, the problem of this approach is that it is an exaggeration to link touch with divinity. Simply the text does not support this reading. Referring to Son of God in the story is out of the context.

(3) A gesture of healing

Many scholars observe Jesus' pity to the leper when he touches him. The reason that Jesus touches the unclean leper is because he places pity over the Law. Jesus' purpose to come to this world is to fulfill the Law (5:17). To emphasize this, the author locates this miracle story at the beginning of the miracle chapters 8-9. In this miracle story, Jesus orders the leper to give the gifts of the Law to the priest when he cast out the leper. This shows Jesus' faithfulness to the Law. However, Jesus touches the leper when he heals the leper. This is the violation of the Law (Lev 5:3), and Jesus must know it. But Jesus responds to the leper's approach which is a break of the prohibition of the Law after another break of the leper by approaching closely to Jesus. Jesus' merciful response is well expressed in the parallel between the approach of the leper (8:2) and the response of

⁵⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁵¹ Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 74.

⁵² Ibid., 74.

Jesus (8:3).⁵³

προσελθὼν	--	προσεκύνει αὐτῷ	--	λέγων,
ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα	--	ἥψατο αὐτοῦ ⁵⁴	--	λέγων,

This threefold parallel shows Jesus' exactly same contrasting responses to the lepers' respect and hope. When the leper comes to Jesus, Jesus stretches out his hand; as a result, there is no supposed distance between Jesus and the leper. When the leper kneels down before, Jesus touches him; Jesus shows pity to the leper's respect and confidence. When the leper asks Jesus' willingness to cleanse him, Jesus answers his willingness to cleanse the leper with the exactly same word order (ἐὰν θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι // Θέλω, καθαρίσθητι). This repletion of the leper's request shows Jesus' strong will to perform the leper's hope.

Kingsbury also observes Jesus' pity in this verse. To him, 'stretching out his hand' is a symbolic motion to perform his power, and 'touching' is mediation of the power to cure the leper.⁵⁵ Here Kingsbury does not see any possibility of ceremonial uncleanness. The text does not give any hint about this uncleanness; this touching behavior is an appropriate act to the healing Messiah as seen in several examples such as 8:15; 9:25, 29; 20:34. In addition, Jesus' touch always brings 'weal' and not 'woe' (8:15; 9:25; 14:31; 19:15; 20:34). Kingsbury also proves Jesus' mercy in Jesus' appropriation of the words of the leper in giving reply to him. According to him, Jesus' response to the

⁵³ Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 97.

⁵⁴ The location of αὐτοῦ emphasizes the fact that Jesus touched the leper. See Gundry, *Matthew*, 139.

⁵⁵ Kingsbury, "The Miracle of the Cleansing," 346.

leper can be interpreted as merciful in character.⁵⁶

Bruner also see Jesus' love in his touching of the leper who has never been friendly touched intentionally since his contamination of leprosy. To him, the fact that Jesus reached out with his hand and touched the leper explains in the easiest way the purpose of all Jesus' miracles: mercy (or love).⁵⁷

Here is a man who since first becoming ill has never been touched. Few acts would affect this constantly shunned leper like this man's touching him. And in that touch we have God's identifying love. It is the gospel that God through his Son Jesus touches us, enters even physically into our lives, and makes us his.

Jesus heals the leper within the distance of the arm by touching him. To Bruner, Jesus' saying "I will. Be cleansed" is just a double confirmation that Jesus communicates his pity by contact and identifies himself with the leper.

Leiva-Merikakis also observes 'truly divine mercy and condescension' in this verse. When the leper kneels down before Jesus as a sign of respect, Jesus does not reject his veneration but responds with the gesture of stretching out his hand and touching the leper. Nobody will touch a leper if a touch is believed to cause him contagious. Jesus does not separate himself from human misery, and comes down from the mountain to meet a leper who lives like a dead (Lev 13:45f). While all human beings try to escape from him, only Jesus approaches him and touches him. "Jesus accompanies his assenting will with an assenting Heart, eager to embrace and communicate life intimately, fully, in

⁵⁶ Ibid., 347.

⁵⁷ Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 301.

body as well as in spirit.”⁵⁸

In sum, the touch of Jesus is not necessary in healing the leper, and Matthew could have removed it from the Markan story if he thought it would be unfitting for a Torah observant Jesus. But he has kept it and shows the crowds who have listened to his teachings on faithfulness to Torah, that the man is more important than observance of the Torah. This verse shows that Jesus places mercy over observance of the Law.⁵⁹ The Law is for human beings, not for the sake of itself. Jesus’ new revolutionary teaching about the Law (5:17-48) in the Sermon on the Mount demonstrates the importance of mercy. Anyone who is angry to his brother and calls him ‘fool’ is subject to judgment. Love of our neighbors should be extended to the love of enemies. The leper is isolated from the society, and he has little hope for cure.⁶⁰ Jesus has compassion to this leper, and does not hesitate touching the unclean person in spite of the violation of the Law. The phrase, “his leprosy was cleansed” again reminds us of Leviticus 13-14 and the context of this situation which is one that concerns the expectations of the Law concerning those with leprosy.

Jesus’ Commandment

Mk 1:44: καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Ὅρα μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἶπης, ἀλλὰ ὑπάγε σεαυτὸν δεῖξον τῷ ἱερεῖ καὶ προσένεγκε περὶ τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ σου ἃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς, εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς (saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them").

Mt 8:4: καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ὅρα μηδενὶ εἶπης, ἀλλὰ ὑπάγε σεαυτὸν δεῖξον τῷ

⁵⁸ Leiva-Merikadis, *Fire of Mercy*, 324.

⁵⁹ Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 41.

⁶⁰ According to Rudolf Pesch (*Markusevangelium* [Basel: Freiburg im Breisgau, 1977], 1.143), cure of leprosy is as difficult as is raising a person from the dead.

ἱερεῖ καὶ προσένεγκον τὸ δῶρον ὃ προσέταξεν Μωϋσῆς, εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς (Then Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them”).

After healing the leper, Jesus’ first command is “Ὁρα μηδενὶ εἰπῆς.” Some scholars link this to the messianic secret of Mark.⁶¹ For example, Hagner understands the messianic secret as historically authentic, even though Matthew is less interested in it than Mark: “Jesus desires simply to avoid inflaming popular, but mistaken, messianic expectations that looked for an immediate national-political deliverance.”⁶² But this explanation is not satisfactory. First of all, it is difficult to apply this theory to all prohibition passages, because each case has a different context.⁶³ This means that there is no one messianic theme unified through any Gospel and the theory of messianic secret cannot be applied mechanically to all cases. Second, if Jesus does not want to reveal his identity in the text, it is difficult to find any reason why he let the leper go to the priest for the gift of Moses. When the leper bears witness to Jesus’ healing, Jesus’ identity will be revealed. This interpretation does not make harmony with “as a testimony to (or against) them.” Third, Matthew omitted Mk1:45, which shows a routine pattern of ‘prohibition of Jesus but spread of the news by the recipient.’ This omission does not explain well why there is no response of the leper about the prohibition.⁶⁴ Fourth, Matthew does not hide

⁶¹ Among them are Hagner, *Matthew*, 199; R. T. France, *The Gospel according to Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, TNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 153; Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 302; Morris, *Matthew*, 190.

⁶² Hagner, *Matthew*, 199.

⁶³ J. D. G. Dunn, “The Messianic Secret in Mark,” in *TynB* 21 (1970), 92-117; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 139.

⁶⁴ Kingsbury says that by the omission of Mk 1:45 Matthew does not appropriate Mark’s messianic secret. See Kingsbury, “The Miracle of the Cleansing,” 347.

Jesus' identity as does Mark.⁶⁵ In the miracle story of healing a paralytic (9:1-8), Jesus even proclaims before the crowd that he has the authority of forgiving sins. This revelation proclaims that Jesus is divine, as we will discuss later. Finally, the last issue is whether the crowd was with Jesus when he healed the leper.⁶⁶ If there was a crowd, Jesus' command for silence seems absurd.⁶⁷ But it seems correct to think that there was a crowd with Jesus because the crowd in 8:1 continues to follow Jesus until the end of the miracle chapters, and even still Jesus' death on the cross. Thus, Jesus' command of silence seems not related with the messianic secret.

This passage seems to be related with Jesus' faithfulness to the Law (5:17). The leper came to Jesus with the confidence that he can heal his leprosy, and Jesus makes the leper's hope become real. Now before Jesus tells him to go to the priest for the witness, he orders the leper to tell to nobody (not 'nothing').

Mk 1:44 Ορα μηδενὶ μηδὲν εἰπης

Mt 8:4 Ορα μηδενὶ εἰπης

Gundry explains that μηδὲν is omitted to "avoid two forms of the same word in succession (so Luke)."⁶⁸ But the case of each word is different: dative vs. accusative. If

⁶⁵ Matthew has retained only five commands for silence (8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 16:20; 17:9).

⁶⁶ Those scholars who think that the crowd was with Jesus are Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 98; Gundry, *Matthew*, 140; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 139. Those who think that the crowd was not with Jesus are Morris, *Matthew*, 190; Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 39; Hare, *Matthew*, 90; Turner, *Matthew*, 231.

⁶⁷ Matthew also usually does not change Jesus' sayings contrary to his tendency of creatively changing the Markan narratives. Probably he might not have felt that he could edit Jesus' sayings. In this sentence, Matthew probably would not want to edit Jesus' saying because it does not seriously mislead the meaning.

⁶⁸ Gundry, *Matthew*, 140.

Mark emphasizes “telling nothing (i.e., the messianic secret) to nobody (even not to the priest),” Matthew’s redaction implicates that “you should tell the news to nobody except the priest” as a witness of Jesus’ miracle by omitting *μηδέν*. According to the Law, the leper is supposed not to approach anyone until he is proclaimed clean by the priest. Thus he should go to the priest first. This sentence shows Jesus’ faithfulness to the Law along with the next threefold order (go... show...offer).

The threefold order of Jesus to the leper is also interpreted variously. Why does Jesus send the leper to the priest? The text says that it was ‘as a testimony for them (*εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς*).’ According to France, there are three main interpretations about this command:⁶⁹ 1) this act will give public proof that the leper is cured and may return into society,⁷⁰ 2) it will prove to the (presumably already hostile) priests that Jesus respects the Old Testament law (5:17) and thus has no intention to challenge the religious system,⁷¹ 3) it is a witness to Jesus’ Messianic mission, as the conqueror of disease (11:5).⁷²

The first possibility is acceptable in that the leper will not be publicly isolated any more after the declaration of the priest as being clean. Then, the people in ‘as a testimony for them’ are the Israel populace, and they will accept the leper as clean and approachable when they see the priest declare the leper’s cleanness. While this interpretation goes

⁶⁹ France, *Matthew*, 153.

⁷⁰ Holland, *Matthew*, 351; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 199.

⁷¹ W. L. Lane, *The Gospel according to Mark* (London: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1974), 88; Vledder, *Conflict*, 179; Hare, *Matthew*, 90; Morris, *Matthew*, 190; Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 302.

⁷² Warrington, *Jesus the Healer*, 36; France, *Matthew*, 153; Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 327; Turner, *Matthew*, 231; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 140.

smooth with the verse, it is a narrow and partial interpretation in that it does not explain enough about Jesus' side. If Jesus just wants only this, he does not need to command silence to the leper. Everybody should know that the leper is clean. In addition, the final goal of Jesus' healing ministry is not making people live according to the Law. Jesus has come to proclaim the coming of the heavenly kingdom. Thus this interpretation is not enough in understanding the author's intention.

This second possibility does not make sense in that the priests are not Jesus' enemies yet in the context. In addition, Jesus does not need any social or political support from the priests. Vledder understands Jesus' command, on the one hand, as "in order to take him back into his community,"⁷³ and, on the other hand, as "Jesus' challenge to the priests to recognize the weak and Jesus who healed the leper."⁷⁴ It seems not correct to find any conflict theme in this story; it is too early to read conflict at the present stage. He reads too much into the text.

The third possibility seems plausible. Healing of leprosy was thought to be impossible to the ancient people. The role of the priest is not healing the leprosy, but pronouncing the uncleanness after occurrence and the cleanness after healing. Some Jewish writings also support this notion. Leprosy comes from God, and it is only God who can heal it.⁷⁵ If there is anyone who can heal the leprosy, he must be the messianic agent that God sends. It is clear to the listener that Jesus is the Messianic agent who is sent by God.

⁷³ Vledder, *Conflict*, 179.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26*, 74.

An alternative explanation is that Jesus is willing to fulfill the Law;⁷⁶ in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus explained that he had come to fulfill and not to abolish the Law. While he broke the Law by touching a leper, it was inescapable because he places mercy over the Law. In addition, he orders the leper to offer Moses' gift to the priest according to Lev 13-14.⁷⁷ But that is not the only reason for this threefold command. At the same time, Jesus wants people to know that leprosy is healed. There is no theme of the messianic secret in this passage. The crowd will bear witness to Jesus' healing of leprosy. In addition, the priest will confirm officially that Jesus healed the leprosy by proclaiming the leper's cleanness.

If the main purpose of Jesus' command is his faithfulness to the Law, then the meaning of the disputative phrase "as a testimony to (or against) them (εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς)" also becomes clear. There have been two issues on dispute in this phrase:⁷⁸ (1) how to interpret the dative (αὐτοῖς): 'to' or 'against', (2) who are they: people or the priest? Of course, the core question is who they are. If they are the Israel populace, the testimony will be 'to them'; on the contrary, if they are the priests, the testimony will be 'against them.'

Those scholars who support the negative interpretation take several points as their proofs. For example, Broadhead approaches the phrase from three viewpoints:

⁷⁶ Among those scholars who support this interpretation are Gundry, *Matthew*, 140; Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 99;

⁷⁷ For the concrete gifts of Moses, see John C. Jeske, "Exegetical Brief: Matthew 8:4 – Offer the Gift Moses Commanded, as a Testimony To Them," in *WLQ* 101 (2004), 281-83; Ryrie, "The Cleansing of Leper," 265.

⁷⁸ Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 99; Jeske, "Exegetical Brief: Matthew 8:4," 281.

grammatical, linguistic and theological patterns.⁷⁹ Grammatically the phrase can be interpreted positively or negatively. Linguistically he observes several parallels of negative witnesses in Mark (6:11, 48; 13:9), NT (Mt 23:31; Acts 4:1, 13:8, 16:23, 26:11; 2 Cor 5:19; 2 Tim 4:16; Greek OT (Amos 3:13). Theologically he observes a prophetic condemnation in which Jesus proclaims a new kingdom against Israel. Through those observations, Broadhead sees “a wholly negative command expressing an immediate prophetic condemnation of the religious leaders of Israel and their practices.”⁸⁰ But his problem is that he just demonstrated the possibility of interpreting negatively with some negative parallels.

Cave also interprets this phrase negatively. He observes three stages in the formation of this miracle story:⁸¹ (1) the historical nucleus, (2) the development of this miracle story under the Greek linguistic influence, (3) addition of conflict between Jesus and the leaders. According to Cave, the phrase ‘as a testimony against them (εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς)’ was added at the third stage,⁸² and thus this phrase is naturally interpreted negatively.

Those who support positive interpretation base their proof on several points.⁸³ For example, Kingsbury understands that the healing of the leper is a sign of the coming of

⁷⁹ Edwin K. Broadhead, “Mk1.44: The Witness of the Leper,” in *ZNWKK* 83 (1992), 257-64.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁸¹ Cave, “The Leper: Mark 1. 40-45,” 245-250.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 249.

⁸³ Among them are Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 99; Gundry, *Matthew*, 140; Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 327; Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 302; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 6; France, *Matthew*, 153; Morris, *Matthew*, 190; M. Green, *The Message of Matthew: The Kingdom of Heaven* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 115.

the messianic age. Therefore, the witness should be a positive one that gives hope of salvation to Israel.⁸⁴

The final phrase, “as a testimony to them” (v.4d), is not to be understood in a negative sense, as an indictment of Israel, but in a positive sense, as intending the salvation of Israel. In attesting through ceremonial observance to the fact that he has been healed by Jesus of death-like leprosy, the cleansed leper becomes a sign that in Jesus Son of God the long-awaited messianic age has in fact arrived (8:17; 11:2, 5, 25-27; 13:16-17).

To Kingsbury, healing of leprosy is (at least he gives such an impression) a sign of Jesus being Son of God as well as the Messiah. He understands this story as “the heart of Matthew’s understanding of Jesus, for it admirably reveals both who he is (i.e., the Messiah, the Son of God) and what he does (i.e., inaugurates the messianic age of salvation).”⁸⁵ But he seems to read too much into the text. The text does not directly describe Jesus as Son of God. As we will explain in the second cluster of the miracles, the author demonstrates Jesus’ deity in the miracle stories of stilling the storm (8:23-27), healing two demoniacs (8:28-34) and healing a paralytic (9:1-8).

Ryrie interprets this phrase positively, but his approach is different from that of Kingsbury. To him, ‘they’ are the priest, not Israel. The role of the Law is giving us the knowledge of sin (Rom 3:20; 5:20; 7:7). The Law cannot cleanse leprosy; it only pronounces that a man is clean or unclean.⁸⁶ Jesus’ purpose of sending the cleansed leper to the priests is ‘as a testimony to them,’ i.e., in order to lead them to the Savior while performing the ritual. To Ryrie, “being saved does not exempt one from lawful living, but

⁸⁴ Kingsbury, “The Miracle of the Cleansing,” 347-8.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 348.

⁸⁶ Ryrie, “The Cleansing of the Leper,” 266.

the law involved is no longer the law of Moses but the law of Christ.”⁸⁷ The priests are not objects of conflict to Jesus. They are not under the Mosaic law any more but under the Christ’s law of grace. Therefore, Ryrie interprets this phrase as ‘as a testimony to the priests.’

In sum, Jesus now tells the healed leper that it is time to rejoin his community and to do it the right way: to present himself to the priests and offer what Moses commanded. This part of the story is already in Mark, but the event occurs publicly in Matthew. Because the crowds are listening, this story also acts as a teaching to the listeners that Jesus’ touch of the man is not a contradiction of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Jesus’ authority over leprosy is based upon mercy, and Jesus puts mercy over the law.

Conclusion

This story plays some important roles as the first story of the nine miracle stories in Matthew 8-9. First, its emphasis on Jesus’ faithfulness to the law shows that the coming chapters are not isolated from the previous chapters. Along with the inclusion (4:23 and 9:35), the beginnings of Chapters 5-7 and 8-9 with Jesus’ ascension and descension of the mount respectively show the unity of Chapters 5-7 and 8-9. At the same time, this story emphasizes Jesus’ fulfillment of the Law as the purpose of his coming (8:4, 17; 5:17-20). The reason that Matthew places this miracle story at the beginning of the miracle chapters is related with Jesus’ faithfulness to the Law.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 199; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 15; Gundry, *Matthew*, 140; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 6; Morris, *Matthew*, 190; Patte, *Matthew*, 112; Michael Green, *The Message of Matthew*:

Second, Jesus' ministry of healing all diseases including leprosy is related with the fulfillment of the Scripture (Isa 53:4; Mt 8:17). He heals every disease that he encounters as the healing Messiah. Jesus' healing of leprosy is very symbolic. Leprosy is one of the most serious illnesses, and one of the messianic signs in 11:4. Jesus also gives the authority to heal diseases to his disciples (10:8). Jesus is the healing Messiah who has the authority to heal every disease.

Third, Jesus' touch of the leper shows that he places mercy over observance of the Law. Jesus does not hesitate stretching out his hand and touching the leper, even though the Scripture prohibits touching a leper (Lev 5:3). If Jesus thought that the law is above mercy, he would not touch the leper. This story illustrates the fact that Jesus puts mercy over the law. Although Jesus' mercy is apparently contradictory to the law, it actually makes the law perfect. If Jesus has fulfilled the law with mercy, his disciples also should be able to fulfill the law with mercy. A true disciple should choose mercy over the law.

Before moving to the second miracle story of the first cluster, let us pause to note Matthew's theme of Jesus' mercy over the law elsewhere in the gospel.

Excursus: 'Mercy over the Law' Elsewhere in the Gospel of Matthew

(1) Emphasis on Importance of Mercy

The evidence that Jesus puts mercy over the law is frequently found elsewhere in the gospel.⁸⁹ First of all, Matthew emphasizes the importance of mercy in many places.

The Kingdom of Heaven (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 115; F. D. Bruner, *Matthew 1-12* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1987), 302; Augustine Stock, *The Method and Message of Matthew* (Collegeville, MN: A Michael Glazier Book, 1989), 130; Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 99.

⁸⁹ Among those scholars who observe mercy as one major theme are Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 454-5; Carson, "Matthew," 134.

Mt 5:7 - The fifth beatitude

For example, the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount includes Jesus' teaching about mercy: "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy (μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται; 5:7)." This fifth beatitude emphasizes the action of Jesus' followers (i.e., to show mercy to the neighbors), contrary to the first four beatitudes. If the first four beatitudes focus on the followers' attitude or mind, the second four beatitudes, which are found only in Matthew, encourage the followers' action.⁹⁰ Here we can observe that the Matthean community emphasizes discipleship based upon action (i.e., practices of mercy, piety,⁹¹ peacemaking and righteousness). We need God's mercy for salvation, because we cannot achieve our salvation with our power. To receive God's mercy,⁹² one needs to be merciful to others (25:31-46). The adjective 'merciful (ἐλεήμων)' means not engagement of sporadic compassion but engagement of continuous pity.⁹³ When we continue to show mercy to others, God will show his mercy to us on the last days (cf. James 2:13).

Mt 18:23-35 "The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant"

The fifth Beatitude is analogously described in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (18:23-35), which illustrates the importance of being merciful to the neighbors.

⁹⁰ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 93.

⁹¹ A pure heart in Matt 5:8 comes from "the psalm piety of the OT" (Ps23:4; 73:1), which means "an undivided obedience to God without sin." A pure heart needs the obedience of the law. See Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 196.

⁹² God's mercy has two sides: future and past. The parable of the unmerciful servant in 18:21-35 tells God' prior mercy. While the disciples received God's mercy, they should show mercy to the neighbors. But at the same time, they need another mercy at the last judgment. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 455; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 196.

⁹³ Morris, *Matthew*, 100.

This parable, which is not found in Luke, well reflects the thoughts of the Matthean community. The unmerciful servant, who had been mercifully forgiven the debt of ten thousand talents by the king, threw into prison his fellow servant who owed him a hundred denarii.⁹⁴ After knowing this, the king became angry: “Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you? (18:33).” Then the king turned him to the jailors to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed. This is the way a disciple will be treated in the kingdom of heavens unless he shows mercy to his neighbors (18:35). Because God first shows mercy to the disciples, they should be able to show mercy to others. Mercy is a human virtue as well as God’s characteristic at the same time (1 Sam 23:21; Ps 72:13; Prov 14:21; Mic 6:8).⁹⁵

Mt 6:9-15// Q 11:2-4 The Lord’s Prayer

The parable of the unmerciful servant reminds us of the Lord’s Prayer. It also emphasizes the importance of forgiveness of other people’s debt in order to be forgiven our debts from God (6:12). Here by ‘debts (τὰ ὀφειλήματα)’ Matthew does not mean monetary debts but moral debts as a figurative meaning. As ten thousand talents and a hundred denarii are used in the parable of the unmerciful servant to compare the size of mercy, the meaning of ‘debt’ should be interpreted figuratively. While Luke reads ‘sin (ἁμαρτία),’ Matthew reads ‘debt (ὀφειλήμα).’ The Matthean text may be close to the original text.⁹⁶ Matthew probably left it unchanged because his Jewish readers would

⁹⁴ While 100 denarii amounts to the wages for a hundred days, it is insignificant compared to the ten thousand talents. A Talent is equal to 6,000 denarii. See Morris, *Matthew*, 475.

⁹⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 454.

⁹⁶ Gundry finds the difference in rendering the same Aramaic word ܕܒܚܐ, The Aramaic word has both meanings. See his book, *Matthew*, 108.

understand debt as sin.⁹⁷ Matthew also probably considered such Matthean story as the parable of the unmerciful servant. The context does not permit the literal meaning of financial debt. This interpretation is supported by the following verses of vs. 14-15. This time Matthew clearly describes the character of the debt: forgiving ‘trespasses (παράπτωματα)’.⁹⁸ Out of six petitions, only forgiveness of sins is emphasized in these attached verses as if forgiveness is the main petition of the Lord’s Prayer. This explanatory repetition of forgiveness stresses how important forgiving of other people’s sins is to the Matthean community.

Mt 25:31-46 The last judgment

The fifth beatitude and the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant imply the eschatological judgment to those who are not merciful. At the end, God’s mercy will not be shown to them as they do not show mercy to neighbors. While we need to obey one of the least of the commandments (5:19), what is more important in salvation is God’s mercy of forgiving our sins. Mt 25:31-46 demonstrates more clearly that the basis of judgment at the last days will be merciful behaviors. Those who showed compassion to ‘one of the least of Jesus’ brothers (ἐν τούτων τῶν ἀδελφῶν μου τῶν ἐλαχίστων)’ brothers will inherit the heavenly kingdom. There have been many discussions about who ‘the least’ are:⁹⁹ (1) all who are hungry, distressed and needy, (2) Apostles and other Christian missionaries, (3) little ones within the Christian community, (4) the Jews and Gentiles who are converted during the Tribulation, (5) Jesus’ disciples. The fifth

⁹⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 611.

⁹⁸ Gundry, *Matthew*, 109.

⁹⁹ Carson, “Matthew,” 519-20.

interpretation seems better than the first because they are separated from the sheep and the goats.¹⁰⁰ ‘The least’ are those who proclaim the gospel according to the will of God in spite of the persecution. The key of this story is mercy. Whoever one of the least may be, those who show compassion to him have their own genuine discipleship and will enjoy eternal lives. According to Carson’s division,¹⁰¹ this story illustrates the compassion for the suffering and the needy. Mercy is the main factor in judging whether one is a sheep or a goat. Here Jesus puts mercy over the law.

Mt 22:34-40// Mk 12:28-34 The great commandment

After all, mercy is very important in the kingdom of heavens. It is one of the two greatest commandments in the Law. Mt 22:34-40 explains that the first great commandment is “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” The second one is “love our neighbor as yourself.” While ‘love (ἀγαπήσεις)’ and ‘be merciful (γίνεσθε οἰκτίρμονες)’ are not the same word, their basic thoughts are same: having sympathy to others. Matthew changes the Markan text which says, “There is no other commandment greater than these.” This implies that all commandments have their orders in importance and ‘love your neighbor’ is second in the importance. By changing “there is no other commandment greater than these (μείζων τούτων ἄλλη ἐντολὴ οὐκ ἔστιν)” into “on these two commandments (ἐν ταύταις ταῖς δυσὶν ἐντολαῖς),” Matthew puts the second greatest commandment at the same level with

¹⁰⁰ Nolland, *Matthew*, 1031-33; Carson, “Matthew,” 520; Gundry, *Matthew*, 514-15; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 377-78; Meier, *Matthew*, 304; Morris, *Matthew*, 639.

¹⁰¹ Carson divides mercy into two aspects: forgiveness for the guilty and compassion for the suffering and the needy. See his book, “*Matthew*,” 134.

the first greatest commandment.¹⁰² All the laws and the prophets are under the rule of those two greatest commandments. This shows that Matthew emphasizes the importance of the second greatest commandment as much as the first greatest commandment in the context. Therefore, we can say that here Jesus also put mercy as one of the two greatest commandments, and thus over the major body of the law.

Mt 18:21-22// Q17:4 On forgiveness

Then, how much mercy should a disciple show to his neighbors? Mt 18:21-22 teaches it: to forgive your neighbors seventy-seven times. According Carson, forgiveness is one of two aspects of mercy.¹⁰³ The rabbinic tradition limits the forgiveness within three times,¹⁰⁴ but Peter asks Jesus if he should forgive as many times as seven. Probably Peter knows the rabbinic tradition and suggests as many as seven times (perhaps with a pompous mind). The number seven is probably a round number which emphasizes a far larger number than is generally expected. Although Peter tries to correspond to Jesus' emphasis on mercy, his number falls short to Jesus' expectations: seventy-seven times. Clearly Jesus does not mean that seventy-seven times is the maximum number; instead, he teaches that there is no limit in forgiving the neighbors contrary to the rabbinic tradition. To Jesus of Matthew, mercy functions as "a hedge against rigidity and absolutism."¹⁰⁵ In addition, Matthew does not mention the pre-condition of forgiveness in Luke 17:4: 'I repent (μετανοῶ).' Luke teaches to forgive whenever the offender begs

¹⁰² Gundry, *Matthew*, 449-450.

¹⁰³ Carson, "Matthew," 155.

¹⁰⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 793; Carson, "Matthew", 405; Morris, *Matthew*, 471.

¹⁰⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 791.

pardon. But Matthew does not require any plead. Here Jesus of Matthew emphasizes mercy as a fundamental factor of the kingdom of heavens.

(2) Jesus' Fulfillment of the OT

Matthew does not simply emphasize the importance of mercy in the coming kingdom of heavens. It is clearly observed in the examples of Jesus' fulfillment of the OT that Jesus puts mercy over the law.

Mt 5:21-26// Q 12:57-59 On anger

The law prescribes not to murder and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment (Ex 20:13, 21:12; Dt 5:17). But Jesus teaches even neither to be angry with his brother nor to call his brother a fool (5:22). They look contradictory at first glance, but actually Jesus is correcting "a shallow and inadequate understanding of what the commandments entails."¹⁰⁶ In other words, Jesus' teaching makes the law perfect: Jesus has come not to abolish but to fulfill the law (5:17). There is no legal responsibility for being angry or calling his brother a fool ("he is answerable to the Sanhedrin"; 5:22b), but those behaviors are not welcomed in the kingdom of heavens. He will be subject to judgment and will be in danger of the fire of hell at the end times (5:22) because they leave the law incomplete (i.e., they break the law). If there is anger in our mind, murder can happen anytime; if we are full of mercy, the law will never be violated and achieves its goal.¹⁰⁷ Jesus is not simply replacing the law with his own commands. The law cannot be but incomplete without mercy; the law should be approached from mercy to be fulfilled. This example shows that Jesus puts mercy over the law.

¹⁰⁶ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 112.

¹⁰⁷ Carson, "Matthew," 148.

Mt 5:38-42// Q 6:29-30 On retaliation

The law also stipulates ‘eye for eye, and tooth for tooth’ (Ex 21:24; Lev 24:20; Dt 19:21). But Jesus teaches not to resist an evil person (5:39). They also look contradictory and surprising at first glance, but Jesus teaches how to fulfill the spirit of the law: “the proper conduct [to fulfill the law] is not retaliation, but readiness to endure a further blow” (i.e., mercy).¹⁰⁸ Jesus’ disciples should not demand retaliation; in addition, they should be able to respond appropriately to the needy contrary to the social standards of expectation. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. At the basis of these practices is mercy. Retaliation will bring further retaliation and it does not fulfill the law. When mercy is added, the law becomes complete. Retaliation is the minimum of mercy;¹⁰⁹ mercy does not break the law but fulfills its real goal.

Mt 5:43-48// Q 6:27-28, 32-36 On love of one’s enemies

The law provides, ‘love your brother and hate your enemy’ (Lev 19:18).¹¹⁰ But Jesus teaches to love even one’s enemies and to pray for those who persecute (5:44). Just following this stipulation will not bring any reward in the kingdom of heavens because even the tax collectors and pagans love their friends. This example also demonstrates that

¹⁰⁸ Morris, *Matthew*, 127.

¹⁰⁹ The principle of proportionate retaliation is a necessary evil to keep the society fair. If any retaliation is permitted, the strong person will have benefit by excessive retaliation. In this sense, the retaliation of the law is positive, but it reflects only the minimum of mercy. See Morris, *Matthew*, 126; Carson, “Matthew,” 155.

¹¹⁰ “Hate your enemies” is not found in the OT. Matthew added this probably to emphasize the contrast between brother and enemy. To him, the brother is not the whole Israel like Lev 19:18. Thus the enemy is not necessarily Gentiles; they are our neighbors who love only those who love them and who greet only their brothers.

the law should be understood from the viewpoint of mercy to be fulfilled. There is no boundary in mercy. If loving brothers is the beginning of mercy, loving enemies is the end of mercy. In other words, loving brothers is the minimum of mercy; if he cannot love his brother, he cannot love his enemies. On the contrary, if he can love his enemies, he will surely love his brothers. Loving enemies is the maximum of mercy and the fulfillment of the law. The logical basis for the love of enemies is God's mercy.¹¹¹ God is merciful to everyone; He sends rain and sun equally to all, whether the evil or the good. Likewise, Jesus' disciple should be able to love his neighbors, whether brothers or enemies. Mercy is the foundation of the law.

Second, Jesus' emphasis of mercy over the law is not found only in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew narrates two Sabbath controversy stories (12:1-8, 9-14) which illustrate that mercy is more important than keeping the Sabbath (Exod 34:21).

Mt 12:1-8// Mk 2:23-28 - Plucking heads of grain on the Sabbath

In the first Sabbath controversy story (12:1-8), the Pharisees criticize Jesus' disciples for plucking heads of grain and eating them on the Sabbath. They regard the violation of the Sabbath as serious, and they plot to kill Jesus at the end. Against this criticism, Jesus defends his disciples' behavior using two OT analogies.¹¹²

The first analogy (12:3-4) is David's story in which David and his men ate the bread of the Presence (1 Sam 21:1-6). While Matthew follows the Markan text without

¹¹¹ Morris, 129; Nolland, *Matthew*, 268-69; Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 239.

¹¹² Some scholars observe three counter-arguments in this dispute. For example, Meier takes the quotation of Hosea 6:6 as the third argument (*Matthew*, 129). But this quotation explains that mercy is the key to understanding why doing good on the Sabbath is lawful through the two examples. In other word, mercy is the main theme of the two examples.

any serious change, he makes clearer the point that the disciples ate the grain because of hunger by adding ‘his disciples were hungry (οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἐπείνασαν; 12:1)’ and “they ate (ἐσθίειν).”¹¹³ Then Matthew omits “they made their way (οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ἤρξαντο ὁδὸν ποιεῖν)” to clarify that plucking was not for making a way but because of hunger. This analogy demonstrates that Jesus puts mercy over the law.

However, Matthew acknowledges that the analogy of Mark is not enough to explain why it is not unlawful for Jesus’ disciples to pluck heads of grain and eat them on the Sabbath. Then, Matthew presents another analogy from his own source or directly from the Torah (Num 28:9-10): “Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? (ἢ οὐκ ἀνέγνωτε ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι τοῖς σάββασιν οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ τὸ σάββατον βεβηλοῦσιν καὶ ἀναίτιοί εἰσιν; 12:5-7). Before doing this, Matthew omits Mark’s reason for the breaking of the Sabbath law by Jesus’ disciples: “The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath (Τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο καὶ οὐχ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὸ σάββατον; Mark 2:27).” Matthew omits the conclusion of Mark because it sounds as if the law of the Sabbath can be easily violated for the sake of human kind. Jesus has not come to abolish the law.

The second analogy is that priests’ violation of the Sabbath is guiltless because the Sabbath sacrifice commanded in Num 28:9-10 takes precedence over the Sabbath. This is what the Pharisees know too, but they do not know that ‘something greater than the temple (τοῦ ἱεροῦ μείζον)’ is here (12:6). The exegetical issue is what ‘something

¹¹³ Gundry, *Matthew*, 221.

greater (μεἰζόν)’ is. It is frequently interpreted as having a relation with Jesus or the kingdom of heavens.¹¹⁴ But Luz understands it as ‘the mercy of God’.¹¹⁵ He interprets ‘the temple (ἱερός)’ as not the institutionalized Jewish religious system but as ‘the sacrifice on the Sabbath.’ If the Pharisees know that mercy is greater than the law, they would not criticize Jesus’ disciples: “For if one is allowed to violate the Sabbath because of sacrifice, how much more must it be allowed because of mercy for those who are suffering, for mercy is more acceptable to God than is sacrifice.”¹¹⁶ Thus the quotation of Hos 6:6 should be used one more time after 9:13 because the Pharisees still do not understand the principle of mercy.¹¹⁷ The Pharisees criticize Jesus’ disciples because they neglect one of the more important matters of the law than giving a tenth of their spices: mercy (23:23).

The conclusion of Matthew about the criticism of the Pharisees is that Jesus is the ‘Lord of the Sabbath (12:8)’, following Mark. While the meaning of this phrase is not clear, it is a reason why Jesus does not condemn his disciples for violating the Sabbath law contrary to Mark; Matthew changes Mark’s ὥστε (‘so’; conclusion) into γάρ (‘for’; reason).¹¹⁸ In Mark, it means that Jesus has authority ‘even (καὶ)’ over the Sabbath

¹¹⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 314; Gundry, *Matthew*, 223; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 330; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 196-7; Morris, *Matthew*, 303; France, *Matthew*, 203; Hare, *Matthew*, 132; Meier, *Matthew*, 129.

¹¹⁵ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 182.

¹¹⁶ Joseph Knabenbauer, *Commentarius in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, vol.I (Paris: Lithiellieux, 1922), 529. Requoted from Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 182.

¹¹⁷ Gundry, *Matthew*, 224.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 224-5.

because his mission for humankind is still being done on the Sabbath.¹¹⁹ However, if it is a reason for Jesus' defending the disciples, this illustrates Jesus' emphasis of mercy over the Sabbath law. Against the criticism of the Pharisees, Jesus forgives his disciples' violation of the Sabbath because of the hunger as the Lord of Sabbath. The Sabbath is the day to appreciate God's mercy, so any damage of life on the Sabbath will not fulfill the purpose of the Sabbath. Thus anyone who appreciates God's mercy will not criticize Jesus' disciples for plucking on the Sabbath because of their starvation. Violating the Sabbath for saving life is lawful and even recommendable as will be seen in the next story.

Mt 12:9-14//Mk 3:1-6 Healing the man with a withered hand

In the second Sabbath controversy story (12:9-14), Jesus teaches that it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath. The Pharisees, who criticized Jesus' disciples for plucking on the Sabbath in the first controversy story, now directly challenge Jesus' healing activity at their synagogue by asking if it is lawful to cure on the Sabbath.

Matthew changes the Pharisees' watching of Jesus to find a fault in Mark 3:2 into a question, thus into a rabbinic debate. In other words, Matthew changes Jesus as the victim of the Pharisees' criticism to the dignified teacher of the Law. Because the healing activity is central to Jesus' ministry, Matthew concentrates on proving the lawfulness of healing on the Sabbath rather than criticizing the Pharisees' wicked mind and plot to kill Jesus as in Mark.

Before answering the Pharisees' question, Matthew's Jesus asks a counter

¹¹⁹ R. H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1993), 143-45.

question if a Pharisee would not pull out his sheep from a pit on the Sabbath, using Q 14:5.¹²⁰ Because Matthew's Jesus already knows their response, he does not wait until they answer; Matthew omits the Markan text: "But they were silent (οἱ δὲ ἐσιώπων)." Because Matthew's purpose is to prove the lawfulness of curing on the Sabbath, he also omits Jesus' anger and criticism against the Pharisees' hardness of mind in Mark 3:5. Without pose for their answer, Matthew's Jesus concludes his counter question with a pronouncement: If they violate the Sabbath law for the mercy of saving a sheep, then much more mercy should be shown to the human being.¹²¹ Thus, Matthew's Jesus clearly answers to the Pharisees that "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." After defending his healing activity on the Sabbath, Jesus heals the man with a withered hand.

Although the law prohibits doing anything on the Sabbath, Matthew's Jesus teaches that doing a merciful thing is more important than simply remaining doing nothing on the Sabbath. Actually doing nothing is not the purpose of the Sabbath: "The day then was looked on as a cessation from labor, a pause, a rest, but this with a view to its being dedicated to God, an opportunity for getting to know God and for worshipping him."¹²² The ultimate goal of the Sabbath is not just rest from labor but dedication to God. Doing good (i.e., showing mercy) on the Sabbath is God's will and does not break the Sabbath law.¹²³ Healing a man on the Sabbath is apparently contradictory to the

¹²⁰ Here Matthew replaces 'a child or an ox (υἱὸς ἢ βοῦς)' into 'a sheep (πρόβατον ἕν)' and 'a well (φρέαρ)' into 'a pit (βόθυνον).' Those changes anticipate the parable of the lost sheep (18:12) and the blind guide leading a blind man (15:14). See Gundry, *Matthew*, 227.

¹²¹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 333.

¹²² W. Scott, "Sabbath," in *NDNT*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 406.

Sabbath law, but it fulfills the Sabbath law because it makes Israel think about mercy as a lifesaving activity. Doing nothing is the minimum of the Sabbath law; doing good (i.e., mercy) is the fulfillment of the Sabbath law.

Matt 23:23-24// Q 11:42 Jesus' fourth woe toward the Pharisees

After all, the disturbance in fulfilling the Scripture is the scribes and the Pharisees, who are hypocritical in observing the law. They give a tenth of their spices – mint, dill and cumin. But they neglect the more important matters of the law: Justice, mercy and faithfulness. Here Jesus does not criticize them for the correct observance of the law (“without neglecting the former”). Their problem is that they seriously distort God’s will in the law. In other words, they do not see the fundamental principle of the Scriptures. Jesus is not seeking a new law; the OT already asks a relationship with God from the heart (Deut 10:12; 1 Sam 15:22; Isa 1:11-18, 43:22-24; Hos 6:6).¹²⁴ As already seen above, the Pharisees do not understand the real meaning of Hosea 6:6 and practice it: “I desire mercy not sacrifice (9:13; 12:7).” In this sense, Jesus is not devaluing the OT but is seeking its fundamental purpose. This is the fulfillment of the law as the purpose of Jesus’ coming (5:17). In Mt 23:23 this is expressed as “the more important matters of the law (τὰ βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου),” which is a Matthean touch. The Matthean community understands justice, mercy and faithfulness as the fundamental principle of the law. As one of them, especially mercy is frequently emphasized in the gospel of

¹²³ Doing good is not required on the Sabbath. In other words, failure to do good does not break the Sabbath law. What Matthew emphasizes is that doing good is better than doing bad on the Sabbath. See Carson, *Matthew*, 284.

¹²⁴ Carson, “Matthew,” 465.

Matthew.

The Second Stage: Jesus' Mercy toward the Gentiles (8:5-13)

⁵Εἰσελθόντος δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἑκατόνταρχος παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν ⁶καὶ λέγων, Κύριε, ὁ παῖς μου βέβληται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ παραλυτικός, δεινῶς βασανιζόμενος. ⁷καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Ἐγὼ ἐλθὼν θεραπεύσω αὐτόν. ⁸καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος ἔφη, Κύριε, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην εἰσέλθῃς, ἀλλὰ μόνον εἰπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου. ⁹καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν, ἔχων ὑπ' ἐμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ, Πορεύθητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ, Ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου, Ποίησον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ. ¹⁰ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθαύμασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς ἀκολουθοῦσιν, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, παρ' οὐδενὶ τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὗρον. ¹¹λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν ἥξουσιν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ¹²οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἐκβληθήσονται εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων. ¹³καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ ἑκατοντάρχη, Ὑπάγε, ὡς ἐπίστευσας γενηθήτω σοι. καὶ ἰάθη ὁ παῖς [αὐτοῦ] ἐν τῇ ᾠρᾷ ἐκείνῃ.

⁵ When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him ⁶ and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." ⁷ And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." ⁸ The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." ¹⁰ When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹² while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.

Introduction

Jesus' mercy as the healing Messiah is not limited only to Israel. Jesus extends his mercy to the Gentiles. If the first miracle story presumes a Jewish petitioner, the second miracle story is unusual in that it features the healing of a servant of a centurion, a Gentile who represents the Roman Empire as a military officer of the occupational forces. Since centurions were usually with their troops, they represented the power of the Roman conquerors, and therefore difficult persons to be loved by Israel. However, as we see,

Jesus is not hesitant to visit the barracks. Thus, the second story has progressed from the issue of responding to Jewish petitioners to extending mercy toward the conquering Gentiles.

Since Luke has his own version of the story (Lk 7:1-10), it is clearly from Q. To identify the Matthean redaction,¹²⁵ we will note the Q reconstruction by the International Q project.¹²⁶

Jesus' Encounter of a Centurion

Mt 8:5-6 ⁵Εἰσελθόντος δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ ἑκατόνταρχος παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν ⁶καὶ λέγων, Κύριε, ὁ παῖς μου βέβληται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ παραλυτικός,

¹²⁵ First of all, the stereotyped Matthean introduction of using the Genitive Absolute structure (Εἰσελθόντος αὐτοῦ) must be Matthew's redaction.

Second, the serious but ambiguous illness of the boy (kakw/j e;cwn h;mellen teleuta/n) is converted into a clear one (paralutiko,j(deinw/j basanizo,menoj). Luke would not make the obvious symptom of the boy into an ambiguous one.

Third, it is frequently pointed out that Matthew might have added Jesus' question (8:7 VEgw. evlqw.n qerapeu,sw auvto,n) to the centurion to increase the dramatic effect (i.e., emphasizing Jesus' negative attitude against the centurion like the case of the Syrophoenician woman in 15:23-24). While the traditional interpretation of this verse is an indicative that Jesus promises to go the centurion's house, recently we witness many scholars who support this reading. If 8:7 is a question, it is probably added by Matthew. We will discuss this issue in detail later.

Fourth, 8:13 is the redaction of Matthew. Probably the narrative end of Q is similar to that of Luke rather than that of Matthew because Luke's end is more natural in the context. Matthew's gospel emphasizes Jesus' authority over all diseases, and the healing should be quick and perfect regardless of the distance and severity.

Fifth, 8:11-12 is inserted to the present place from its original place of Luke 13:28-29. If this was in the original text, it is hard to explain why Luke removed this passage. Clearly this insertion is related with Mt 28:18-20. The centurion's confession of faith is an outstanding example contrasting with the faithlessness of Israel.

Sixth, Israel's faithlessness is emphasized with the change of 'not even in Israel did I find such faith (Lk7:9; Λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τοσαύτην πίστιν εὕρον)' into 'with no one did I find such faith in Israel (Mt 8:10; Αμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, παρ' οὐδενὶ τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὕρον).' This substitution explains well why Matthew quoted Lk13:28-29. By changing the commendation of the centurion's faith into a strong condemnation of Israel, the author shows his attitude toward Israel.

As we saw some examples, Matthew redacted the original text.

¹²⁶ James M. Robinson, Paul Hoffmann, and John S. Kloppenborg, eds., *The Critical Edition of Q: Synopsis Including the Gospel of Matthew and Luke, Mark and Thomas with English, German, and French Translations of Q and Thomas* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000), 102-117.

δεινῶς βασανιζόμενος (⁵When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him ⁶ and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress").

Q 7:1, 3 ¹[καὶ ἐγένετο ὅτε] ἐ[πλήρω]σεν .. τοὺς λόγους τούτους, εἰσῆλθεν εἰς Καφαρναούμ. ³ἦλθεν αὐτῷ ἐκατόνταρχ[ο]ς παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν [καὶ λέγων·] ὁ παῖς [μου κακῶς ἔχ<ει>]. καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ·, ἐγὼ] ἐλθὼν θεραπεύσ[ω] αὐτόν; ([And it came to pass when] he .. ended these sayings, he entered Capernaum. There came to him a centurion exhorting him [and saying: My] boy [<is> doing badly. And he said to him: Am I], by coming, to heal him?).

This story starts with the Genitive Absolute, the Matthean writing style, to describe Jesus' entrance into Capernaum. At that moment, a centurion approaches and begs Jesus as if he were waiting for him. As the approach of a leper to Jesus was very unusual, the approach of a centurion must be also unusual to the hearers. Centurions feature in the gospel only here and at the crucifixion scene of Jesus, where in Mark's tradition Mk15:39// Mt 27:54 // Lk 24:47 he calls out and identify (Mk15:39// Mt 27:54), and in Luke's tradition, Jesus' innocence (Lk 24:47).¹²⁷ It is important to understand a centurion's status in the first century because of this entrance of a centurion and his faith.

Most commentators of Matthew correctly point out that the centurion is a Gentile, which makes him marginalized in the Jewish society. The centurion is unclean and is despised as 'a symbol of Roman subjugation.'¹²⁸ He cannot participate in Israel's inner life.

Male gentiles were considered unclean unless they became proselytes, were circumcised, and ritually washed. Only a leper was more unclean

¹²⁷ The centurions are found only elsewhere in Acts of the Apostles. This book offers two examples of kind centurions, first in Acts 10:1-48, where Cornelius is shown to be devout, fearing God, along with his household, and then in Acts 28:42-44, where the centurion guarding Paul on his way to Rome for trial, blocks the soldiers from killing the prisoners because he wants to save Paul. Other than this, other references show them in their role of obeying orders from superiors (Acts 22:29; 23:18; 24:23; 27:1-38).

¹²⁸ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 140.

than a gentile. Consequently, Jesus' almost precipitate willingness to go to this seeking gentile's home would have struck serious people of God as careless.¹²⁹

The author of Matthew, so aware of Jewish religious prescriptions, would be aware then of Jesus' seeming carelessness. If Jesus visits the centurion's barrack, Jesus will be defiled.¹³⁰ Thus the centurion implores Jesus to heal his boy by saying a word instead of coming to his home. This centurion's faith that Jesus can heal his boy with a word makes Jesus surprised and Jesus heals his boy at a distance. His faith is an ideal model of any Christian as long as the faith itself is concerned. This centurion's faith helps predict the success of the Gentiles' evangelization in the future (28:18-20). But this understanding is not enough to understand the tension of a centurion's entrance.

There have been many discussions about the status of centurions. As a whole, it is agreed that the centurion is the lowest ranking officer in the Roman army in charge of about 100 soldiers. His main function is "to preserve the interests of the [Roman] rulers and to maintain the status quo."¹³¹ It goes without saying that the centurion plays an important role in maintaining the Roman Empire.

However, there are some disagreements about several issues. One of them is whether the centurion is a Roman or not. In other word, the issue is whether the centurion belongs to the auxiliary forces or the Roman legions. Those scholars who deny the Roman centurion point out the fact that the location of the centurion's home is nearby

¹²⁹ Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 303.

¹³⁰ J. D. M. Derrett, "Law in the New Testament: The Syro-Phoenician Woman and the Centurion of Capernaum," in *NovT* 15 (1973), 179.

¹³¹ Vledder, *Conflict*, 180.

Capernaum.¹³² This implies that the centurion's army is located around Capernaum, but historians show that it was controlled by the auxiliary forces during the times of Jesus, not the legions. Other scholars note that according to Vegetius, all centurions were Romans to keep Roman control over all parts of the army.¹³³ The question is whether the audience hearing this story would conclude that the centurion was Roman or a local man. The introduction of the petitioner as a centurion suggests that a foreigner, a Roman, is intended, because Jesus' exclamation "I never saw such faith in Israel" takes on more drama this way. His ethnicity as a Roman centurion will bring a tension to the listeners, because Israel was under the control of Rome at that time.

Second, it is being debated whether the centurion is a commissioned officer or not. While the centurion is generally thought to be the lowest commissioned officer,¹³⁴ some scholars do not agree to it. For example, W. Cotter has cited that the centurion is a noncommissioned officer. That is, they do not have their quarters close to the commander's house like those of tribunes or other officers but in the barracks with the soldiers, but their role is training the soldiers through more direct contacts with the soldiers.¹³⁵ In addition, the centurion is not allowed to marry. Augustus banned soldiers

¹³² Burner, *Matthew 1-12*, 302; Emil Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - A.D. 135)* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1973), I: 363-64; Derrett, "Law In the New Testament," 175; France, *Matthew*, 154; Morris, *Matthew*, 192; Nolland, *Matthew*, 354; M. Speidel, "The Roman Army in Judea under the Procurators: The Italian and Augustan Cohort in the Acts of the Apostles," in *RAS*, vol.2 (Stuttgart: Franz Stener, 1992), 233-34.

¹³³ Yann Le Bohec, *The Roman Imperial Army*, trans. R. Bate (London: Batsford, 1994), 78; Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 109-111; Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 328; Turner, *Matthew*, 232.

¹³⁴ Vledder, *Conflict*, 123, 180; G. E. Lenski, *Power and Privilege: A Theory of Social Stratification* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 243.

¹³⁵ Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 111-12.

below the ranks of senatorial and equestrian officers from marrying, and this ban was effective during the first century.¹³⁶ If this is true, there is a strong possibility that παῖς in Mt 8:6 should be interpreted as ‘servant’ rather than ‘son.’ While some of the centurions had common law wives and children, this would constitute an openly shameful admission by a centurion. The point of the story is not about his ‘disobedience’ to the army but his complete obedience! And through this understanding of authority he has confidence in Jesus.

Third, was the centurion’s image positive or negative to the Jews? In spite of being the noncommissioned officers, centurions were given a wide range of authority as “the oldest and most deeply Romanized sections of the middle class.”¹³⁷ They sometimes function as patrons and benefactors to the locals they live. Luke 7:1-10 gives evidence of the centurion’s contributions to Jewish synagogue. According to Jason Moralee, centurions’ names are often in the first century inscriptions found in the villages and cities of the Near East along with imperial administrators.¹³⁸ Centurions also served as judges and peace keepers of the civilians under their jurisdictions.¹³⁹ This judiciary role of centurions naturally comes from the characteristic of their duty as peace keepers on behalf of the Roman emperors.

¹³⁶ Brian Campbell, “The Marriage of Soldiers under the Empire,” in *JRS* 68 (1978), 153-66; Derrett, “Law in the New Testament,” 174; Peter Garney, “Septimius Severus and the Marriage of Soldiers,” in *CSCA* 3 (1970), 45-53.

¹³⁷ Yann Le Bohec, *Roman Imperial Army*, trans. R. Bate (London: Batsford, 1994), 78.

¹³⁸ Jason Moralee, ‘*For Salvation’s Sake*’: *Provincial Loyalty, Personal Religion, and Epigraphic Production in the Roman and Late Antique Near East* (London: Routledge, 2004), 50-51.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 36-36.

However, the image of the centurion was negative rather than positive to the first century Jews. The centurions frequently abused their power. According to Howell, “centurions were often benefactors and judges of their provinces does not necessitate that they were simultaneously considered honest and just.”¹⁴⁰ For example, Tacitus attributes the soldiers’ poverty to the cruel centurion to whom the soldiers had to pay bribes.¹⁴¹ According to Campbell, the soldier’s abuse was the most common civilian experience.¹⁴² They oppressed the civilians with their special privileges as comrades of the emperor, and at the center of this oppression was the centurion.

If the centurion has such a negative image to the Jewish people, the entrance of a centurion to the scene would give tension to the listeners. A centurion is one of the last persons who will respect the Jewish tradition as ‘the agent and enforcer of the imperial status pro.’ But the centurion addresses Jesus as ‘Lord’ in Matthew’s gospel. Matthew adds this title to Q, a sign that the centurion sees Jesus in a positive light. In addition, when the centurion asks Jesus to heal his boy, the tension becomes double. If we consider that “centurions usually are confident and authoritative,”¹⁴³ it is unimaginable for a centurion to come and appeal to Jesus, a Jew! Certainly the centurion’s extraordinary concern for the boy shows his deep emotional link.¹⁴⁴ For this Matthew adds detail to the

¹⁴⁰ Justin R. Howell, “The Imperial Authority and Benefaction of Centurion and Acts 10.34-43: A Response to C. Kavin Rowe,” in *JSNT* 31 (2008), 37-39.

¹⁴¹ *The Annals* 1.17; *The Histories* 1.46

¹⁴² J. B. Campbell, *The Roman Army* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 170.

¹⁴³ Nolland, *Matthew*, 354.

¹⁴⁴ There are several explanations about this unexpected behavior of the centurion. The most popular and traditional interpretation is the centurion’s goodwill in harmony with the Gospel of Luke. Luke

condition of the boy in Q.

Q 7:3a ὁ παῖς [μου κακῶς ἔχ<ει>].

Mt 8:6 Κύριε, ὁ παῖς μου βέβληται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ παραλυτικός, δεινῶς βασανιζόμενος.

Matthew illustrates the boy as being paralyzed in a terrible distress (παραλυτικός, δεινῶς βασανιζόμενος). Alus Cornelius Celsus (ca 25 BC—ca 50), a Roman encyclopedist, describes the seriousness of paralysis as follows;¹⁴⁵

Those who are gravely paralyzed in all their limbs are as a rule quickly carried off, but if not so carried off, some may live along while, yet rarely however regain health. Mostly they drag out a miserable existence, their memory lost also (Celsus, *On Medicine* 3. 27).

To emphasize the severe condition of the boy Matthew adds that the boy is lying at home (βέβληται ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ). This suggests total paralysis. The boy is not just sick (ὁ παῖς [μου κακῶς ἔχ<ει>) like Q, but he can die any time. The centurion has no hope except Jesus. He has every confidence in Jesus, and humbles himself to beseech Jesus, a civilian.

7:1-10 describes the centurion as a patron and benefactor of Israel who loves Israel and built a synagogue. Israel elders witness this centurion's worthiness and ask Jesus to heal his servant. One critical problem of this approach is that the Matthean text does not explain the centurion's philanthropic behavior at all.

Other more often than not interpretation is that the centurion came to a colonized Jew to save his son. It is not natural for a centurion to give up his self-esteem in order to save a servant, however precious the servant may be to him. One problem of this interpretation is that the centurion, a God-fearer, would probably not break the rule that Roman soldiers should not marry.

A new interpretation of παῖς is that the centurion tried to save his boy-love. According to Theodore W. Jennings and Tat-Siong Benny Liew, παῖς can be used as referring to not only 'slave', 'child' but also "the passive member (usually though not necessarily an adolescent boy) of a same-sex relationship." One problem of interpreting παῖς as a 'boy-love' is that this explanation does not consider the Jewish Law's strict prohibition of homosexuality. Lev 18:22 and 20:13 proscribe sexual behaviors between males.

In sum, it seems better to focus on the centurion's good will and thus interpret παῖς as 'servant' in the context because the story itself emphasizes the centurion's faith. Contrary to the negative image of a centurion to the Jewish people, this centurion extraordinarily shows a philanthropic attitude toward his servant who is suffering with a serious paralysis.

¹⁴⁵ Celsus, *On Medicine*, vol. 1. trans. by W. G. Spencer (London: Heinemann, 1914).

Jesus' Response

Q 7:3b καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, ἐγὼ] ἐλθὼν θεραπεύσ[ω] αὐτόν; (And he said to him: Am I], by coming, to heal him?).

Mt 8:7 καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Ἐγὼ ἐλθὼν θεραπεύσω αὐτόν (and he said to him, "I will come and cure him").

Following Q, the centurion makes a simple statement about his boy's situation and not a request of healing as many commentators interpret: "Lord, my servant lies at home paralyzed."¹⁴⁶ His concern is if Jesus has the will to heal because the centurion knows that he is not clean as a Gentile and cannot invite Jesus to his home. By mentioning his boy's serious situation, the centurion challenges Jesus' willingness to heal.

To the challenge of the centurion, Jesus responds very briefly. What is important in understanding Jesus' response is whether this sentence is a statement or a question.

(1) Jesus' response as a statement

Traditionally it is understood as a statement that emphasizes Jesus' positive response to heal the centurion's boy with mercy and without hesitance, even if he is a Gentile. For example, Derrett interprets this sentence as a simple statement.¹⁴⁷ According to him, Jesus' response in vs. 8-9 should be different if the sentence is a question meaning "Do you mean that I should go and heal him?" The centurion would emphasize his worthiness rather than his unworthiness like the Canaan woman (15:27) if Jesus

¹⁴⁶ Derrett, "Law in the New Testament," 161-186; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 141; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 204; Morris, *Matthew*, 192; Bruner, *Matthew*, 303; Leiva-Merkikakis, *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word*, 330; Turner, *Matthew*, 232.

¹⁴⁷ Derrett, "Law in the New Testament," 176.

resists his request for help.¹⁴⁸ Derrett argues that there is no reason for Jesus to refuse visiting the centurion's home because Jesus was not concerned for ritual cleanness as seen in the touch of a leper (8:3).

Blomberg also interprets this sentence as a statement which emphasizes Jesus' willingness to heal. According to him, "an emphatic 'I' is equally appropriate for a forceful statement [as much as for a question], and in the context Matthew seems to be stressing Jesus' authority and control in each new encounter so as to make a question less appropriate."¹⁴⁹ Thus to Blomberg the centurion's emphasis on his unworthiness is very natural.

But the problem of this understanding is that the following explanation is not harmonized well with this interpretation. Actually the following dialogue between Jesus and the centurion is not necessary because Jesus shows his willingness to heal. There is no reason for the centurion to suggest any counter proposal against Jesus' willingness to visit his home. There is nothing to explain this counter proposal with except the centurion's extraordinary respect for Jesus' dignity.

Another problem of this understanding is that, if it is a question, it can increase the drama by the anticipation that Jesus' resistance can draw the centurion's faith all the more strongly through his humbleness as Blomberg admits.¹⁵⁰ This understanding is similar to Jesus' rejection of the Canaan woman's request. But the centurion's faith

¹⁴⁸ Interestingly those scholars who interpret this sentence as a question think that the centurion's response would not be appropriate if it is a simple sentence. See below.

¹⁴⁹ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 141.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

surprised Jesus as the Canaan woman's faith made Jesus astonished. There is no decisive evidence for interpreting this sentence as a simple statement.

(2) Jesus' response as a question

Recently some scholars understand this sentence as a question which shows Jesus' reluctance to heal.¹⁵¹ For example, R. A. J. Gagnon understands the role of this question sentence as a dramatic tool to "heighten the literary tension and so to magnify the ultimate victory of faith."¹⁵² Because the centurion is a Gentile, Jesus is reluctant in healing his boy like the example of the Canaan woman's daughter (10:5-6; 15:23-24). But the centurion's faith overcomes Jesus' reluctance and Jesus heals the centurion's boy by saying the word as the centurion requested. Clearly interpreting the sentence as a question showing Jesus' reluctance gives more dramatic effect to the story. In addition, Mt 8:11-12 shows "the overturned place between the Gentiles and Israel as the perfect complement to the reverse exclusivism of 8:7."¹⁵³

R. A. Martin also supports this view. According to him, only when this sentence is interpreted as an astonished question, the following things can be explained well: (1) the emphatic "I" plays its role in the context, (2) the renewed appeal of rejecting Jesus' visiting his home and asking Jesus' word in v.8 can have logical meanings.¹⁵⁴ To him,

¹⁵¹ For the list of those scholars who support this understanding, see Gagnon, "the Shape of Matthew's Q text," 136 n. 15; Derrett, "Law in the New Testament," 175 n.5; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 141 n.12; Martin, "The Pericope of the Healing of the Centurion's Servant/ Son," 19 n. 6; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 22 n. 21.

¹⁵² Robert A. J. Gagnon, "The Shape of Matthew's Q Text of the Centurion at Capernaum: Did It Mean Delegations?" in *NTS* 40 (1964), 136.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 136 n.15.

Jesus' willingness does not give any dramatic effect and the story is awkward.

Davies and Allison add some more reasons, agreeing to the interpretation of this sentence as a question.¹⁵⁵ First, he uses John 4:46-54 in which Jesus responds negatively against the official's plea to show signs and wonders as another stream of tradition showing Jesus' negative response. To him, this can be a pre-Matthean tradition testing the centurion's faith as a question. Second, because Matthew was a Jew, he possibly thought that law-abiding Jesus would not enter the Gentile's residence before the great commission in Mt 28:16-20.¹⁵⁶

However, the problems of this approach are the key points of the interpretation of this sentence as a statement demonstrating Jesus' willingness. For example, to become unclean is not important to Jesus as seen in the story of healing a leper. Jesus touched him before the crowds, even though he becomes defiled. Another problem is that emphatic "I" does not always makes a sentence a question as Jennings and Liew prove. According to them, the centurion also uses an emphatic "I" in 8:9, but it is not a question.¹⁵⁷ In addition, there are many examples of emphatic "I" in Matthew that is used as statement not questions.¹⁵⁸ They also observe Matthew's tendency to use grammatical markers such

¹⁵⁴ Ralph P. Martin, "The Pericope of the Healing of the Centurion's Servant/ Son," in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 15.

¹⁵⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 22.

¹⁵⁶ Luz also shows a similar interpretation. See his book, *Matthew 8-20*, 10.

¹⁵⁷ Theodore W. Jennings and Tat-Siong Benny Liew, "Mistaken Identities but Model faith: Regarding the Centurion and the Christ in Matt 8:5-13," in *JBL* 123 (2004), 478.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 479.

as τί or τίς, πόσος or πότε, οὐ or μή for a question sentence.¹⁵⁹

In sum, the sentence itself does not clearly reveal its meaning. Grammatically emphatic 'I' does not necessarily make this sentence either a question or a statement. Theologically it is not clear if the sentence represents Jesus' willingness or Jesus' rejection of a Gentile. After all, the sentence's meaning should be decided by the context. In understanding this sentence, v.6 seems especially important. Interpretation of v.7 depends on the interpretation of v. 6 whether it is a request or a challenge for Jesus' willingness. In other words, if v.6 is a request, v.7 is better interpreted as Jesus' question, a negative response to the request; however, if it is a challenge of the centurion to check Jesus' will, v.7 is understood better as Jesus' determined willingness to heal his boy.

The sentence should be interpreted as a statement because v.6 is not a request but a challenge to urge Jesus' willingness. When he finds Jesus' willingness, he shows extraordinary faith in the following verse. By asking Jesus just to say a word,¹⁶⁰ the centurion shows his unequalled faith in Israel to Jesus' power to heal any disease even at a distance. Then, this sentence shows Jesus' mercy even to a Gentile. Jesus' willingness without hesitance shows no ethnic barrier in healing a disease. If Jesus shows his mercy by touching the leper in the first miracle story, Jesus shows mercy again, this time progressively by showing his willingness to go to a Gentile's home to heal an unclean Gentile's boy.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Probably the centurion was familiar with the Jewish tradition as a God-fearer. He loved Israel and built the synagogue according to Luke 7:5.

¹⁶¹ This story seems to have a different context from the story of the Canaan woman. As we will explain later, this first cluster of the miracles emphasizes Jesus' power to heal any disease.

The Centurion's Faith

Mt 8:8-9 ⁸καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος ἔφη, Κύριε, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην εἰσέλθῃς, ἀλλὰ μόνον εἰπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθήσεται ὁ παῖς μου. ⁹καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν, ἔχων ὑπ' ἑμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ, Πορεύητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ, Ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου, Ποίησον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ (⁸The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it").

Q 7:6bc-8 ^{6bc}καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ ἑκατόνταρχος ἔφη, Κύριε, οὐκ εἰμὶ ἱκανὸς ἵνα μου ὑπὸ τὴν στέγην εἰσέλθῃς, ἀλλὰ εἰπὲ λόγῳ, καὶ ἰαθή [τω] ὁ παῖς μου. ⁸καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ ἄνθρωπός εἰμι ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν, ἔχων ὑπ' ἑμαυτὸν στρατιώτας, καὶ λέγω τούτῳ, Πορεύητι, καὶ πορεύεται, καὶ ἄλλῳ, Ἔρχου, καὶ ἔρχεται, καὶ τῷ δούλῳ μου, Ποίησον τοῦτο, καὶ ποιεῖ (And in reply the centurion said: Master, I am not worthy for you to come under roof; but say a word, and [let] my boy [be] healed. For I too am a person under authority, with soldiers under me, and I say to one: Go, and he goes, and to another: Come, and he comes, and to my slave: Do this, and he does [it]).

Verse 8: the centurion's inferiority to Jesus

The interpretation of v.8 is influenced by that of v.7. If v.7 is a statement explaining Jesus' firm willingness to heal a Gentile, v.8 is the centurion's humble confession of his faith.¹⁶² Because the centurion knows that his rank is lower than that of Jesus, he instead firmly implores Jesus to say a word to heal his boy. This demonstrates his unrivaled faith in Israel that he admits Jesus' dignity and believes in his healing power 1) with a word, and 2) at a distance. Here 'unworthiness' means the centurion's inferiority to Jesus not his ethical humbleness as in Luke. Jesus' dignity is too high for the centurion to invite him to his home. He also might have the feeling of defiling Jesus as an unclean Gentile.

On the contrary, if v.7 is Jesus' astonished question to the request of the

¹⁶² Bruner, *Matthew*, 303-4; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 204; Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 331-2; Turner, *Matthew*, 232; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 141.

centurion, v.8 is the centurion's response to Jesus' question.¹⁶³ The centurion does not accept Jesus' suggestion. Instead, calling Jesus again as "Lord" demonstrating his unshaken faith, he asks Jesus to heal his boy by saying a word in lieu of coming to his home.¹⁶⁴

In sum, the evidence that v.7 should be interpreted as a statement is the centurion's humble confession of non-equality with Jesus enough not to be able to have Jesus under his roof. When Jesus says his willingness to go to his house, the centurion humbly confesses his inferiority. Here the word *ικανός* plays an important role in understanding the exact meaning of this sentence. This word means 'sufficient, competent' rather than 'worthy of, deserving of, meet for.'¹⁶⁵ Here the centurion seems to emphasize Jesus' superior rank to his rather than his own humbleness like Luke 7:4 (*ἄξιός ἐστιν ᾧ παρέξῃ τοῦτο*).¹⁶⁶ The centurion would use *ἄξιός* rather than *ικανός* if he want to emphasize his moral guilt. If this is correct, it is wrong to interpret the word *ικανός* as a synonym of 'worthy (*ἄξιός*).' Jesus is too high in rank to be invited to the centurion's barrack. This answer implies that the centurion's ethnicity does not matter in his answer to Jesus. In this sense, v.7 cannot be Jesus' astonished question to a Gentile

¹⁶³ Hare, *Matthew*, 91; France, *Matthew*, 155; Nolland, *Matthew*, 355; Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 10; Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 8-18, 22; Morris, *Matthew*, 193.

¹⁶⁴ This interpretation is frequently linked to the Canaan woman's bold response to Jesus' rejection of her request in 15:27 as an argument that Jesus is respecting the centurion: ἡ δὲ εἶπεν, Ναὶ κύριε, καὶ γὰρ τὰ κυνάρια ἐσθίει ἀπὸ τῶν ψυχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῶν κυρίων αὐτῶν (She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table"). Based upon that story we would have a real insult if that were a parallel. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 8-18, 22; Gagnon, "Matthew's Q Text," 136 n. 15; Nolland, *Matthew*, 355.

¹⁶⁵ BAGD, 374.

¹⁶⁶ Cotter, *Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 132.

who seeks the healing of his boy. In addition, if v.7 is a question, the centurion's answer should be Yes or No. Instead, the centurion's response is also a statement.

Another reason for the support of the statement is that Jesus commends the centurion for his unequalled faith. If we follow the interpretation of v. 7 as Jesus' question, Jesus commends the centurion on the basis that the centurion asks saying a word for healing instead of visiting his house. In other word, because the centurion believes that Jesus can heal a disease by his command alone *ἰκανὸς*, Jesus praises the centurion's faith. But with such confession it is doubtful if the centurion deserves such praise that Jesus has not seen such faith in none of Israel. On the contrary, if we understand v.7 as a statement describing the centurion's challenge appealing to Jesus' willingness, this behavior itself is a great faith which shows his careful thought about Jesus' exalted status as well as his faith to Jesus' power to heal any disease. When Jesus says his willingness to go to his house, the centurion humbly confesses his inferiority. Jesus' dignity is too great to be invited to the centurion's house. This is the second stage showing the centurion's elevated faith. Finally the centurion asks Jesus just to say a word to heal his boy, which is the climax of the centurion's faith. To the centurion, Jesus, like an officer, has been endowed with authority; he is of an exalted rank. All those three factors contribute to the genuineness of the centurion's faith. Even the Canaan woman's faith cannot be compared with the centurion's faith. Then, the centurion's faith is worthy of Jesus' praise that he has never seen such faith in Israel.

Verse 9: the contents of the centurion's faith

Verse 9 explains why the centurion thinks that Jesus does not need to come to the

centurion's house. Here the centurion demonstrates his faith that there is no limit in Jesus' healing power; he believes that Jesus can heal his boy even with a word at a distance. According to the centurion, because Jesus is a man under authority like the centurion himself, the (spirit of the) disease will follow Jesus' order like his soldiers. Jesus praises this centurion's faith as the finest one. The key issue is what kind of authority the centurion believes Jesus has.

The similarity between the roles of the centurion and Jesus is frequently mentioned.¹⁶⁷ For example, S. H. Hooke observes a similar relationship between Jesus' activity and the centurion's own.¹⁶⁸ According to him, the key point of the centurion's response to Jesus' willingness is that a centurion is under the authority of the higher rank, and at the same time is in authority over his soldiers. So is Jesus. The soldiers under the centurion's authority obey him because his order represents that of the higher rank (ultimately that of the Roman emperor). The centurion's authority comes from the Roman Emperor and is backed with the emperor's power. Likewise, Jesus is under the authority of God the Father, and his exercise of authority is in accordance with Father's will. The centurion's confession of faith is not only an admission of Jesus' power over the disease but also the recognition of God's power behind Jesus. The centurion demonstrates an advanced faith, compared with the leper who simply believed in Jesus' ability to heal his leprosy. Jesus wants people to see God behind him, but the centurion is

¹⁶⁷ Derrett, "Law in the New Testament," 177; Hagner, *Matthew 1-12*, 205; S. H. Hooke, "Jesus and the Centurion: Matthew viii.5-10," in *ExpTim* 69 (1957), 79-80; J. A. G. Haslam, "The Centurion at Capernaum: Luke 7:1-10," in *ExpTim* 96 (1985), 109-110; Morris, *Matthew*, 194; Nolland, *Matthew*, 355; Vledder, *Conflict*, 181; Hare, *Matthew*, 91.

¹⁶⁸ S. H. Hooke, "Jesus and the Centurion: Matthew viii.5-10," in *ExpTim* 69 (1957), 79-80.

the only person who finds God's authority in Jesus. Thus, Jesus praises the centurion's faith as the best one he has ever seen, and through the faith of the centurion Jesus anticipates the gentiles' gathering in the kingdom of God.

J. A. G. Haslam shows a similar interpretation. According to him, the centurion's duty in Capernaum is not a normal service. Because he is in charge of this region without any higher rank, he should decide everything under his responsibility. To do his service well, he should understand his commission (the intention of Rome). Thus Haslam translates ὑπὸ ἐξουσίαν as 'under commission' rather than 'under authority (KJV, NAB, NAS, NIV, RSV, JB)' or 'under orders (NEB, REB)' in the sense that commission implies better the administrative situation of the centurion.¹⁶⁹ Haslam applies the centurion's relation with his superiors to that of Jesus to God.¹⁷⁰ The centurion does not simply obey his superiors' orders as in the normal military relationship; instead, he needs to serve his commissioned duty with sincere devotion as the person in charge of the region. The same relationship can be applied to Jesus. Jesus is doing exactly what he received from God as his commission. Thus, as the centurion's men follow his orders, the centurion believes that everything under God's control including the paralysis of his boy will obey the order of Jesus, the commissioner of God. This faith makes Jesus surprised because he has never seen such faith in Israel.

The centurion knows that as his authority is given by the Roman Emperor, Jesus' authority comes from God. The centurion can issue an order and this order should be

¹⁶⁹ J. A. G. Haslam, "The Centurion at Capernaum: Luke 7:1-10," in *ExpTim* 96 (1985), 109.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

carried by his soldiers. The success of the Roman Empire is based upon this principle.¹⁷¹

Likewise, Jesus can issue an order and this order will be obeyed because he has authority.

In sum, this section demonstrates the content of the centurion's faith. He confesses his inferiority to Jesus not deserving Jesus' visit to his house. Instead, he asks Jesus to say a word to heal his boy. His explanation of his confidence in Jesus' authority shows the high level of his faith. The centurion thinks that Jesus is under heavenly authority commissioned by God, and Jesus can order healing powers as much as the centurion can order his men. The theological importance of this verse is that the centurion believes that Jesus has been given divine authority.

Jesus' Praise of the Faith

Mt 8:10 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθαύμασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς ἀκολουθοῦσιν, Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, παρ' οὐδενὶ τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὗρον (When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith).

Q 7:9 ἀκούσας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐθαύμασεν καὶ εἶπεν τοῖς ἀκολουθοῦσιν, λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τοσαύτην πίστιν εὗρον (But Jesus, on hearing, was amazed, and said to those who followed: I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith).

Jesus is surprised at the content of the centurion's response because he is one of the last persons who are expected to have this kind of faith. Generally centurions would be seen as incapable of religious sensibility. His faith to Jesus is unrivaled in Israel. His threefold confession of faith (Jesus' power to heal – his protestation of unworthiness – Jesus' authority from God) also leads to Jesus' threefold responses.

First, Jesus was surprised. This is the only record that Jesus was surprised in the

¹⁷¹ Derrett, "Law in the New Testament," 177.

Gospel of Matthew.¹⁷² This rare expression is related with the unexpected faith of the centurion, which is the object of Jesus' surprise. Although Jennings and Liew interpret the word θαύμαζω as having a negative denotation like 22:33 in which the Pharisees were 'surprised' at Jesus' teaching,¹⁷³ this word expresses Jesus' positive surprise at the centurion's unexpected faith unrivaled in Israel.

Second, 'ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν' is used to emphasize the centurion's faith in the following sentence. 'Αμὴν is the transliteration of the Hebrew אמן, which means 'truly' or 'verily'. By putting this phrase at the beginning, the reader expects that Jesus' diction will follow and the diction will be proclaimed with Jesus' self-confident authority.¹⁷⁴ This prefatory usage of amen is not found in OT or in the rabbinic literature. While amen is generally used as a response to the previous statement in OT or in the rabbinic literature,¹⁷⁵ this expression, one of Matthean characteristic rhetorical devices,¹⁷⁶ emphasizes the importance of what follows. This expression is the second preparatory step for the emphasis on the centurion's faith in the following sentence.

Third, Matthew changed the Q text to emphasize the centurion's faith and Israel's faithlessness. Especially Israel's faithlessness is emphasized with the change of 'not even

¹⁷² Mark 6:6 is the only other record of Jesus' surprise that we can see in the New Testament.

¹⁷³ Jennings and Liew, "Matthew 8:5-13," 486-7.

¹⁷⁴ Nolland, *Matthew*, 219.

¹⁷⁵ For example, one typical usage is Deut 27:15-26, where the people of Israel are supposed to answer with amen to the readings of the Levites on Mount Ebal.

¹⁷⁶ This expression occurs 31 times in Matthew: 5:18, 26; 6:2, 5, 16; 8:10; 10:15, 23, 42; 11:11; 13:17; 16:28; 17:20; 18:3, 13, 18; 19:23, 28; 21:21, 31; 22:16; 23:36; 24:2, 34, 47; 25:12, 40, 45; 26:13, 21, 34.

in Israel did I find such faith (Lk7:9; οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ τοσαύτην πίστιν εὑρον)’ into ‘with no one did I find such faith in Israel (Mt 8:10; οὐδενὶ τοσαύτην πίστιν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ εὑρον).’ This substitution explains why Matthew quoted Lk13:28-29 in the following section.

Through this threefold expression, Matthew emphasizes the centurion’s faith and Israel’s faithlessness at the same time. The ignorance of Israel in contrast to the Gentile’s fine faith leads to Jesus’ condemnation of Israel’s future in the next sentence.

Israel’s Faithlessness

Mt 8:11-12 ¹¹λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν ἔξουσιν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν (I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven), ¹²οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἐκβληθήσονται εἰς τὸ σκότος τὸ ἐξώτερον· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων (while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth").

Q 13:29, 28 ²⁹[καὶ πολλοὶ] ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν καὶ δυσμῶν ἔξουσιν καὶ ἀνακλιθήσονται ([and many] shall come from Sunrise and Sunset and recline) ²⁸μετὰ Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, [ὕμ<εῖ>ς] ἐκβλ[ηθήσ<εσθε> εἰς τὸ σκότος το] Ἐξω[τερον]· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων (with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God, but [you will be] thrown out [into the] out[er darkness], where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth).

The purpose of those two verses is to emphasize the contrast between the centurion’s faith as a precursor of Gentiles and Israel’s failure to inherit the kingdom because of unbelief.¹⁷⁷ For this purpose, Matthew borrows those verses from Q sayings (Lk 13-28-29).¹⁷⁸ Those verses explain the theological significance of the centurion’s

¹⁷⁷ Davies and Allison, 25.

¹⁷⁸ As M. E. Boring says, ‘it is relatively easy to account for Matthew’s insertion of this saying into his context, but difficult to explain Luke’s removal of it.’ In addition, it is difficult to find another,

faith to Matthew. Many will come from east and west and will participate in the eschatological banquet (Isa 25:6).¹⁷⁹ But the heirs of the kingdom will be rejected. Those who come from east and west have such faith as the centurion's, but the heirs of the kingdom do not have that. One important issue here is who Matthew intends as the heirs of the kingdom and who he intends as those who come from east and west.

(1) Rejected heirs of the kingdom as Jewish people

Many scholars interpret 'the heirs of the kingdom' as the Jewish people and 'those who come from east and west' as Gentiles. For example, Hagner understands that with this proclamation of Jesus the eschatological banquet becomes not limited only to Jews, but Gentiles can also participate in the banquet.¹⁸⁰ In OT, 'many from east and west' were thought diaspora Jews returning to Israel (Ps 107:3; Isa 43:5) because the banquet is strictly limited to the Jews. However, in Matthew this exclusive banquet of Israel is open to Gentiles after the coming of Jesus the Messiah (Mt 28:18-20). To Hagner, the centurion represents "the beginning of a stream of Gentiles who will come from east and west to join the eschatological banquet."¹⁸¹ On the other hand, the heirs of the kingdom (the Jews who are supposed to participate in the eschatological banquet) will be rejected because of their faithlessness. Now there is a big change in the history of salvation: "The true sons of the kingdom are now those who respond to the proclamation

non-matthean or non-lukan, context for the sayings in Q.' See his article, "A Proposed Reconstruction of Q 13.28-29," in *SBL 1989 Seminar Papers*, 9.

¹⁷⁹ "On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear (Isa 25:6)." Notice this theme of substitution of the Gentiles which will occur later in Matt 22:1-14.

¹⁸⁰ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 205.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 205-6.

of Jesus (cf. 13:38; cf. 5:45).”¹⁸²

Blomberg shows a similar interpretation. He interprets ‘those who come from east and west’ as many outside Judaism and ‘the heirs of the kingdom’ as many from within Judaism. According to this definition, the diaspora Jews belong to ‘many from within Judaism’ because they are within the boundary of Judaism. Many outside Judaism will follow Jesus like the centurion. Thus, the centurion is “a paradigm of many outside Judaism (“from the east and the west,” cf. Ps 107:3)” with his unrivaled faith.¹⁸³ However, he does not use the concept of the eschatological banquet like Hagner. According to him, in those two verses Jesus “points forward to a time beyond his earthly ministry when Gentiles will flock to the faith.”¹⁸⁴ Thus, to him, the gathering does not mean a specific historical event on the last days but the evangelism of the Gentiles.

Therefore many within Judaism (the heirs of the kingdom) who still believe themselves part of the kingdom, soon they will find themselves that they are ‘eternally excluded from God’s presence.’¹⁸⁵ Here we cannot observe any concept of the returning of the Jews to the faith of Jesus. The Jews themselves will taste the pain of exclusivism reversely.

Gagnon observes that “Matthew’s motive for inserting this material was to establish another link between the Gentile centurion’s confession of faith in the unlimited authority of Jesus (Matt 8.9) and the claim to such authority by the risen Christ in Matt

¹⁸² Ibid., 206.

¹⁸³ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 142.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

28:18.”¹⁸⁶ This is Matthew’s characteristic writing style. Matthew frequently uses ‘repetition (anticipation and retrospection)’ as his main device of plot.¹⁸⁷ An example is “Immanuel” in Matt 1:23, which anticipates the Great Commission: “I will be always with you to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:20). To the Matthean community, the centurion’s faith to Jesus is an early confession of the Great Commission by a Gentile and gives the basis for the community’s decision to ‘make disciples of all nations’ (20:19). On the other hand, the faithlessness of the Jews leads to Jesus’ condemnation of ‘throwing into darkness.’ This anticipation is repeated in 27:25: Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” The Jews reject Jesus while the Gentiles embrace Jesus. The result of this is that “the kingdom will be opened to Gentiles and closed to ‘heirs of the kingdom’.”¹⁸⁸ Gagnon also does not use the concept of the eschatological judgment here.

Main stream of scholarship maintain similar interpretations in spite of differences in detail. The Matthean community’s understanding about the relationship between Gentiles and the Jews may reflect their experience of Israel’s killing of Jesus on the cross and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. While the Gentiles turn to God and join the kingdom, the sons of the kingdom reject Jesus and lose the kingdom with the fate of ‘weeping and gnashing in the darkness.’

(2) Rejected heirs of the kingdom as Jewish leaders

¹⁸⁶ Gagnon, “Matthew’s Q Text,” 138 n. 20.

¹⁸⁷ Janice C. Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 152.

¹⁸⁸ Gagnon, “Matthew’s Q Text,” 138 n. 20.

However, some scholars interpret ‘the heirs of the kingdom’ as the Jewish leaders who have no faith such as the Pharisees, priests and scribes and ‘many who come from east and west’ as those who have faith to Jesus. For example, Davies and Allison read the text not as a contrast between Jews and Gentiles but as a contrast between privileged and unprivileged Jews (especially the leaders such as Pharisees vs. diaspora Jews).¹⁸⁹ The Jews who reject Jesus will be judged on the last day.

They rebut the interpretation of the text as a contrast between Jews and Gentiles with the following arguments:¹⁹⁰ (1) the text does not clearly mention ‘Gentile.’ (2) ‘The many from east and west’ is originated from Ps 107:3, which describes the return of Jewish exiles to Jerusalem. The many are diaspora Jews who return to Jerusalem rather than the Gentiles. (3) Jewish texts link ‘east and west’ to the return of diaspora Jews from east (Babylon) and west (Egypt) to Jerusalem. (4) OT describes the coming of the Gentiles not as a judgment of Israel but as a witness of God’s glory. (5) OT does not mention that Israel as a whole is doomed to judgment. (6) the pilgrimage of the diaspora Jews is connected with the eschatological feast (Ps 107; Isa 25-7, 49; Ezek 37-9).

All those evidences support that Matthew are not emphasizing the salvation of the Gentiles and the condemnation of all Jews. If the many are diaspora Jews, Matthew is warning the privileged Jews, especially those leaders who are faithful in their own eyes and think themselves as the heirs of the kingdom. Then 8:11-12 focuses on “the salvation of the seemingly unfortunate as opposed to ‘the sons of the kingdom,’ the wise and

¹⁸⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 28.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

privileged who have lived in Eretz Israel and beheld the Messiah, and yet do not believe.”¹⁹¹

Morris avoids dividing ‘the many from east and west’ and ‘the heirs of the kingdom’ into two ethnic or geographical groups. To him, ‘many’ is not a specific or ethnic group. They are the saved people including the Gentiles who come from all over the world.¹⁹² On the other hand, ‘the heirs of the kingdom’ are the Jews who were expected to share the kingdom but lose their privileges because of the lack of faith.¹⁹³ In verses 11-12, thus, Jesus is giving a dire warning against the people of God (and to the crowds) who are expected to respond to the Messiah with faith and commitment. If they fail to show faithful response to Jesus as the centurion does, they will be responsible for the dreadful result of wailing and grinding the teeth in the darkness.¹⁹⁴

Jennings and Liew also reject the dichotomical understanding of vs. 11-12 between the Gentiles and the Jews. According to them, Matthew is “more interested in playing with the fluidity between Jews and Gentiles in order to instill a sense of instability than in promoting any kind of ethnic partition, priority, or proxy.”¹⁹⁵ In other words, Matthew’s concern is not a contrast between Gentiles and Jews but a contrast between those who are really in the kingdom and those who are apparently in but not really in the kingdom. As a proof, they explain that the phrase “weeping and grinding of

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 28.

¹⁹² Morris, *Matthew*, 195.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Turner also shows a similar interpretation. See his book, *Matthew*, 233.

¹⁹⁵ Jennings and Liew, “Matthew 8:5-13,” 480.

teeth,” which is used total six times in Matthew (8:12; 14:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30), is always used in the context in which those two groups of faith and unfaithfulness are compared. Thus they understand Jesus’ limited mission to Israel as the geographical boundary of Israel, whether Gentile or Jew.¹⁹⁶ They see no trouble in Jesus’ associating with Gentiles within the boundary of Israel.

The problem of this interpretation is that they do not consider the role of Gentiles in the history of salvation. While Matthew’s gospel makes it clear that the Jews rejected and killed Jesus, his gospel acknowledges by the infancy narratives (2:1-12) that the Gentiles will be the first to adore Jesus. Matthew shows Jesus reaching out to the Jews (10:5-6), but the Matthean community saw the destruction of the Temple as part of God’s turning to the Gentiles. In addition, historically diaspora Jews were not religiously and geographically separated from the Jews in Israel. They shared Judaism and diaspora Jews regularly visited Jerusalem. It does not make sense to suppose that diaspora Jews will come to Jerusalem to show homage to God and Israel on the last days. Finally the geographical understanding of ‘those who come from east and west’ as the people outside Israel and ‘the heirs of the kingdom’ as the people in Israel¹⁹⁷ is not persuasive.

In sum, Jesus’ pronouncement seems to reflect the historical events. The Jews killed Jesus and the gospel was proclaimed to the Gentiles. After 70 AD, the Gentiles took the initiative in the salvation history, and the heirs of the kingdom lost their privilege because of their faithlessness. The heirs did not understand God’s will that the Gentiles are not excluded from the kingdom; they are just next to the Jews in salvation as seen in

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 481.

¹⁹⁷ Jennings and Liew, “Matthew 8:5-13,” 481; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 29.

many places in the gospel of Matthew.¹⁹⁸ While some scholars understand this story as Jesus' proclamation of the judgment of Israel,¹⁹⁹ this is a kind of a warning for the faithlessness of Israel. All Jewish people will not be punished as all Gentiles will not be saved.

Jesus' Healing

Mt 8:13 ¹³καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ ἑκατοντάρχῃ, Ὑπάγε, ὡς ἐπίστευσας γενηθήτω σοι. καὶ ἴαθη ὁ παῖς [αὐτοῦ] ἐν τῇ ὥρᾳ ἐκείνῃ (¹³And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour).

Q did not hold a report of the healing for both Matthew and Luke must add their own. Matthew finishes this story with Jesus' performing of the centurion's request. This is why this story is a miracle story rather than just a pronouncement story. After giving warning to the crowd following him from the mount, Jesus heals the centurion's boy according to his faith. The centurion believes that Jesus can heal any disease with a word even at a distance. Jesus' merciful healing of a Gentile's servant occurs as soon as he speaks the word: "the servant was healed in that hour." To the author of Matthew, there is no limit in Jesus' healing power. Just one word heals the patient perfectly and quickly even at a distance.

In sum, Jesus is the merciful healing Messiah without any ethnic boundary.

He is not hesitant to visit a centurion's house.

Before moving to the last miracle story of the first cluster, let us pause to note Matthew's theme of Jesus' mercy toward the Gentiles elsewhere in the gospel.

¹⁹⁸ The examples will be shown later.

¹⁹⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 17; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 202.

Excursus: “Mercy toward Gentiles” elsewhere in the Gospel

Matthew’s pro-Gentile perspective is well known.²⁰⁰ In Matthew we can find several places where the Gentiles are welcomed and God’s mercy is shown to them along with the second miracle story (8:5-13). Matthew’s pro-Gentile perspective is climaxed in the Great Commission of Mt 28:16-20. In the gospel of Matthew, the Gentiles are just next to Israel in the order of salvation.

Mt 1:1-17 The Matthean Genealogy

Matthew begins his gospel with Jesus’ genealogy (1:1-17). Here we can observe two important points in relation to Gentiles. The first one is that Jesus is described as the son of Abraham as well as the son of David. ‘The Son of David’ is another title for the Messiah (Isa 11:10; Jer 23:5, 33:15; Zech 3:8, 6:12), and Matthew frequently uses this title (1:1, 20; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15). However, ‘the Son of Abraham’ is not found elsewhere in Matthew.²⁰¹ This unique usage seems to demonstrate a special intention of the author in the context. When Matthew describes Jesus as ‘the son of Abraham,’ he seems to include Gentiles as the objects of his salvation.²⁰²

Abraham, meaning ‘the father of many nations’ (Gen 17:5), is the true father of

²⁰⁰ David C. Sim, “The Gospel of Matthew and the Gentiles,” in *JSNT* 57 (1995), 20. Of course, we do not mean by ‘pro-Gentile’ that Matthew’s gospel is directed to the Gentile world, as Luke’s is but only that Jesus shows himself receptive to Gentiles.

²⁰¹ Abraham himself is mentioned in some places of Matthew (1:2, 17; 3:9; 8:11; 22:32) as “the prototypical Israelite whose eminent status in God’s kingdom is unquestionable.” See Turner, *Matthew*, 57.

²⁰² Nolland thinks that “it is probably a mistake to find any hint of good news for the Gentiles on the basis of the wider reach of the promises to Abraham” (*Matthew*, 72). Luz goes further by saying that “the expression appears not to say anything special about Jesus” (Matthew 1-7, 70). However, Abraham should be understood in relation with the theme of Gentiles, which is one main theme of the gospel.

all who have faith, whether Jew or Gentile (Mt 8:11-12; cf. Rom 4:1-25, Gal 3:6-29).²⁰³

A Gentile, if he has the same faith with Abraham, can become a spiritual descendent of Abraham. Here we can find the universal blessing by Jesus as the Son of Abraham;²⁰⁴ this universal blessing is also clearly mentioned at the end of the gospel (28:19). If the title ‘Son of Abraham’ in 1:1 adumbrates the salvation of the Gentiles, the great commission in 28:19 declares it. In other words, Matthew begins his gospel with the unusual concern about Gentiles by describing Jesus as the Son of Abraham, and the unusual concern is highlighted at the end of the gospel with the mission commandment for the Gentiles.

At the same time, we cannot neglect the possibility that the title ‘Son of Abraham’ might have been used as a title of the Messiah like ‘Son of David.’ *Testament of Levi* 8:15 uses this as a messianic title, and this shows the possibility that some branches of Judaism recognize ‘Son of Abraham’ as a messianic title.²⁰⁵ This is supported with the fact that Gen 22:18 (cf. Gen 12:3; 18:18) predicts that the Messiah will come from Abraham’s seed: “By your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice (בְּיִרְעָךָ כָּל גּוֹי הָאָרֶץ עָקַב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעַתָּ בְּקוֹלִי:) (וְהִתְבְּרְכוּ.”²⁰⁶ All the nations are blessed at the end of the gospel (Mt 28:19): “Go and make disciples of all nations (πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη).” Thus Jesus has come to fulfill not only David’s kingdom covenant but also Abraham’s covenant of

²⁰³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 158; D. Senior, “Two Worlds: Gentiles and Jewish Christians in Matthew’s Gospel.” in *CBQ* 61 (1999), 14.

²⁰⁴ Gundry, *Matthew*, 13; Morris, *Matthew*, 21; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 110; Montague, *Companion God*, 18; Patte, *Matthew*, 18.

²⁰⁵ Carson, “Matthew,” 62; J. C. Hutchison, “Women, Gentiles, and the Messianic Mission in Matthew’s Genealogy,” in *BS* 158 (2001), 161.

²⁰⁶ ‘Your offspring (בְּיִרְעָךָ)’ is a singular, which means the Messiah, not the Jews.

universal blessings. In other words, Jesus is the promised Messiah as the Son of David and Son of Abraham, and he will save the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

The second important point in the genealogy of Matthew is that four Gentile women are mentioned among the ancestors of Jesus: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba. While Bathsheba is sometimes questioned her identity as a Gentile,²⁰⁷ she should be understood as 'the wife of Uriah' as Matthew does not identify her name; Matthew describes her as a wife of a Gentile, a Hittite. The entrance of four Gentile women is an intentional addition for some special goal.²⁰⁸ It is hard to find any persuasive reason for the entrance of these four Gentile women in the genealogy of Jesus except the fact that they or their families showed extraordinary faiths as Gentiles, compared to Israel.²⁰⁹

The faith of Tamar versus that of Judah, of Rahab versus that of the wilderness generation, and of Ruth versus that of the Israelites in the time of the judges was displayed at crucial times in Israel's history when Gentiles demonstrated more faith than Jews in response to God. Mention of "the wife of Uriah" rather than her name was probably meant to focus attention on Uriah and his faith in contrast to that of David, Israel's king.

The mention of some Gentile women in Jesus' genealogy reminds the readers that some Gentiles already showed great faiths even in the OT times before the precursory faiths of

²⁰⁷ C. L. Blomberg, "The Liberation of Illegitimacy: Women and Rulers in Matthew 1-2," in *BTB* 22 (1992), 145; M. R. J. Bredin, "Gentiles and the Davidic Tradition in Matthew," in *FCHBNT* (Sheffield; Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 96-97.

²⁰⁸ According to John C. Hutchison, there are four major explanations about the purpose: 1) the inclusion of the four Old Testament women highlights their background as sinners and God's grace in accepting them, 2) the inclusion of the women celebrates the inclusion of Gentiles in Messiah's genealogy and mission, 3) the Old Testament women, like Mary, all had unusual marital situations and even sexual scandal in their past, 4) the inclusion of the women reveals Matthew's defense of the Davidic messianic viewpoint in contrast to those who supported the priestly line. See his article, "WOMEN, GENTILES, AND THE MESSIANIC MISSION IN MATTHEW'S GENEALOGY," in *BS* 158 (2001), 154-56. Carson summarizes into three; 1) four Gentile women in link to Abraham, 2) gross sexual sin, 3) strange and unexpected workings of Providence in preparation for the Messiah. See Carson, "Matthew," 66.

²⁰⁹ Hutchison, "Women, Gentiles," 160.

the centurion (Mt 8:5-13) or the Canaan woman (Mt 15:21-28) before the Great Commission in Mt 28:16-20. Their faiths played some critical roles in the messianic line of David. The contrast between the Gentiles' faiths and Israel's faithlessness is observed again and again in the gospel (3:7-12; 8:5-13; 11:20-24; 12:15-21; 12:38-42; 15:21-28; 21:28-32, 33-43; 22:1-14; 25:1-13; 14-30, 31-46). Here Matthew does not only ask his Jewish community to repent for faithlessness but also accept the faithful Gentiles as a part of the church.²¹⁰ Jesus' genealogy surprisingly includes some Gentiles who showed extraordinary faiths.²¹¹ This implies that salvation of Gentiles is not excluded from God's plan even though we should wait for Jesus' post-Easter proclamation.

Mt 2:1-12 The Adoration of the Magi

Because of the twofold introduction of this theme at the beginning of the gospel we are not surprised at the following story of the Gentile magi (Mt 2:1-12), which is found only in Matthew. Although there have been diverse interpretations about this story's historicity, the point is that Matthew's intention lies in theological understanding of the story:²¹² the Messiah's birth "provoked Jewish hostility but won Gentile acceptance."²¹³ In contrast to Luke in which Jesus was born in a manger of an inn and some Jewish shepherds visited Jesus after the angel's notice, Matthew simply describes that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and only the magi from the East visited Jesus following the Messiah's star and worshipped him as the Messiah. The story of Jesus' birth itself is

²¹⁰ Ibid., 164.

²¹¹ Glenna S. Jackson, "Are the 'Nations' Present in Matthew?" in *HTS* 56 (2000), 944.

²¹² Carson, "Matthew," 82; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 25; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 106.

²¹³ Carson, "Matthew," 82.

very simplified and Matthew emphasizes that its purpose is to fulfill Micah 5:2: “But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.”

What is shocking in this passage is that those who witness Jesus’ birth are not the Jews but the Gentiles.²¹⁴ The Jews have been waiting for the Messiah for several hundred years, but Jesus’ birth is blessed by none of the Jews. The Jews do not know if the Messiah is born in Bethlehem, even though Micah 5:2 clearly predicts it. All the Jerusalem is frightened when they hear it from the wise men from the East. On the contrary, the Gentiles, symbolized as the wise men from the East, witness the baby Jesus with their eyes and give him three gifts. The good news is not limited to the Jews. The revelation of the Messiah to the Gentiles is a precursory realization of Abraham’s universal blessings which is intimated in Jesus’ genealogy.²¹⁵ The traditional Jewish notion that Abraham discovered astrology and Chaldean science supports the link between Abraham and magi.²¹⁶ Matthew might understand that Abraham invented astrology for this purpose. This contrast between the Jews and the Gentiles also predicts Jesus’ rejection by the Jews and his worship by the Gentiles in the coming story.

Mt 4:12-17//Mk 1:14-15 Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee

In adopting Mark’s gospel, Matthew has augmented it significantly. For Matthew,

²¹⁴ In this story, we can find a main theme of Matthew: “the flow of the Gentiles to Israel’s Messiah and his rejection by Jerusalem that comes to a climax in the passion narrative.” See Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 115.

²¹⁵ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 31.

²¹⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 159, 253.

Jesus' move from Nazareth to Capernaum fulfills Isa 9:1-2. After John the Baptist's incarceration, Jesus comes to Capernaum and begins to preach people to repent. To Matthew, Capernaum is the base of operations for Jesus' ministry in Galilee. The Jews in Galilee do not have "the religious and cultic advantage of Jerusalem and Judea."²¹⁷ In addition, they lived in mix with the Gentiles. Thus they are despised by the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea. They live in darkness and do not have much hope for salvation. However, Jesus comes to the despised Jews in Galilee; the messianic light first dawns to this dark place full of sinners.

However, Galilee also has another meaning to Matthew. Here Matthew reveals his pro-Gentile perspective again. The relationship between the five geographical references are under debate, but it is generally accepted that 'Galilee of the Gentiles (4:15)' is the key phrase summarizing the four expressions of Galilee.²¹⁸ Historically this area was dwelled by a large Gentile population (Judge 18:7, 28; 2 Kings 15:29, 17:24-27). Although Jesus limits his ministry to Israel (10:5-6; 15:24), he begins his ministry in the region with many Gentiles. He encounters with many Gentiles and heals them. This foreshadows the Great Commission to "all nations" in 28:19.²¹⁹ Although Jesus does not actively try to reach the Gentiles during his earthly ministry, the mission to the Gentiles in Mt 28:19 is not a sudden change of direction of his ministry, but it is based upon the

²¹⁷ Carson, "Matthew," 117.

²¹⁸ This phrase is thought to be the key point for the quotation of Isa 9:1-2. See Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 158; Gundry, *Matthew*, 60; Morris, *Matthew*, 81; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 383.

²¹⁹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-7*, 73; Carson, "Matthew," 117; Morris, *Matthew*, 82; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 385; Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 158; Gundry, 60; Nolland, *Matthew*, 173.

fulfillment of a biblical perspective: Isa 9:1-2.²²⁰

Mt 4:23-25// Mk 1:39 A Preaching Journey in Galilee

This inclusio along with 9:35 serves the initial stage of Jesus' ministry, including Jesus' teaching, preaching and healing activities. The text indicates that not only the Jews but also the Gentiles followed Jesus when he started his ministry: "News about him spread all over Syria...Large crowds from Galilee, *the Decapolis*, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him (*Italic mine*)."

Mark 3:7-8 ⁷Καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ἀνεχώρησεν πρὸς τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ πολὺ πλῆθος ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας [ἠκολούθησεν]· καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰουδαίας (Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed him); ⁸καὶ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰδουμαίας καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου καὶ περὶ Τύρον καὶ Σιδῶνα, πλῆθος πολὺ ἀκούοντες ὅσα ἐποίει ἦλθον πρὸς αὐτόν (hearing all that he was doing, they came to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon).

Matt48:25 ⁵ καὶ ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ ὄχλοι πολλοὶ ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας καὶ Δεκαπόλεως καὶ Ἱεροσολύμων καὶ Ἰουδαίας καὶ πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου (And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan).

In Mark the multitude follows Jesus from Galilee at the beginning, and then all over the region. However, the mix of Jewish and Gentile cities in Matthew illustrates Matthew's description of Jesus as the evangelist to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. According to the Senior, The Gentiles as well as the Jews form the audience of the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew includes people from "all Syria" and the "Decapolis" among the crowds who come to Jesus immediately prior to the Sermon on the Mount. This seems to imply that both Gentiles and Jews are among those who first experience Jesus' healings, whose presence prompts the first great

²²⁰ Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 158.

discourse of Matthew's Gospel.²²¹

This shows that the Gentiles are also included in the crowds who experienced Jesus' teaching and healing from the beginning. Matthew's pro-Gentile perspective can be observed here; the Gentiles are not only interested in the messianic grace of healing but also the messianic teaching about the heavenly kingdom. Matthew's concern about the Gentiles continues, even if though it is indirect.

Mt 10:5-6 The Sending out of the Twelve

⁵Τούτους τοὺς δώδεκα ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς παραγγείλας αὐτοῖς λέγων, Εἰς ὁδὸν ἔθνων μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε καὶ εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθῃτε (These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans), ⁶πορεύεσθε δὲ μᾶλλον πρὸς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραὴλ (but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel).

In this special Matthean addition to the mission speech, Matthew clarifies that the travels of the disciples will stay in Palestine. Yet, it is clear that Jesus is ready to respond to the Gentiles who live there, among the Jewish people.

Mt 12:15-21// Mk 3:13-19 Accusations against Jesus

Matthew again demonstrates his pro-Gentile perspective through his formula quotation: Isa 42:1-4. The quotation draws the whole picture of Jesus' ministry at the beginning of separation between Jesus and Judaism in the middle of the gospel.²²²

Matthew probably wants to remind his readers of Jesus' character again as the servant of

²²¹ D. Senior, "Two Worlds," 14.

²²² Many scholars approach this quotation from this viewpoint. For example, Hagner comments that the quotation provides a full picture of "the person and mission of Jesus" (338). Green also says that the quotation describes in miniature "Matthew's conception of the role of the Christ which is spelt out in the gospel as a whole" (125).

the Lord: gentleness, mercy, nonviolence and love.²²³ This is God's will and Jesus obeys to it without any compromise, hesitance, or resistance.

The reason God chose Jesus as his servant is the proclamation of 'justice' to the Gentiles (12:18). While κρίσις is frequently translated as 'judgment', here it has a positive connotation in the context (cf. v. 21) and is generally translated as 'justice' like the case of Mt 23:23.²²⁴ This means that the gospel of salvation will include the Gentiles, and therefore foreshadows the mission to the Gentiles in 28:19. This Gentile inclusion to salvation is emphasized once more at the end of the quotation: "The Gentiles will hope in his name (12:21)." It is astonishing that the Gentiles put their hope in the Messiah's name. This verse shows that the Gentiles are not excluded from salvation; through Jesus the Gentiles as well as the Jews can find salvation.

This quotation also emphasizes that Jesus' mission to the Gentiles is based upon the Scripture like Mt 4:12-17. It expresses the Gentiles as having God's concern as the objects of salvation. Jesus' role is bringing salvation to the peoples of whole nations according to the will of the Father. In this sense, ἔθνη had better be translated as 'all nations' including Israel rather than the Gentiles only.²²⁵ The Gentiles are just next to the Jews in the order of salvation.

Mt 12:38-42// Q 11:29, 30-32 Against Seeking for Signs

This pericope illustrates a contrast between the faithlessness of the Pharisees/

²²³ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 196.

²²⁴ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 338; Nolland, *Matthew*, 493; Gundry, *Matthew*, 229; Morris, *Matthew*, 310 f. 48; Turner, *Matthew*, 316; Meier, *Matthew*, 132; ?Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 453.

²²⁵ Morris, *Matthew*, 312; NIV.

scribes and the faithfulness of the Ninevites/ Queen of Sheba. The Ninevites repented when they heard Jonah's preaching about the heavenly kingdom; the Queen of Sheba came a long way to hear Solomon's wisdom. But the Pharisees and scribes, who represent the wicked and adulterous generation, are seeking evidence after evidence, even though they have witnessed far more evidence from 'one greater than Jonah and Solomon' than the Gentiles had from Jonah and Solomon. Jesus criticizes them for unfaithfulness, using the story of Jonah. Jesus' final sign for the Messiahship will be his resurrection after three days in the tomb. This story, which contrasts the faithlessness of the Jews and the faith of the Ninevites like the four Gentile women in the genealogy, is another example of Matthew's pro-Gentile perspective. Here we meet again the theme of faithful Gentiles and unfaithful Jews.²²⁶

Mt 15:21-28// Mk 7:24-30 The Syrophoenician Woman

This pericope defines the boundary of Jesus' ministry along with Mt 10:5-6: "the lost sheep of the house of Israel (15:24)."²²⁷ At the same time, Jesus discloses himself as the promised Messiah for Israel: "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel (Οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ)." What Matthew added to the Markan text is the conversation between Jesus and his disciples (15:22-24). When the disciples asked Jesus to send away the Canaan woman because of her continuous shouting for help, Jesus confirms their rejection of the woman with that he was sent only to Israel as he taught them to go to Israel in 10:5-6. This addition re-emphasizes the

²²⁶ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 355; Nolland, 509, 513; Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 468.

²²⁷ Of course, this does not mean that Jesus will gather all Israel. While all Israel is the target of Jesus' ministry, all of them will not be converted. See Carson, *Matthew*, 355.

boundary of Jesus' ministry within Israel after Mt 10:5-6.

However, Jesus also shows his mercy to this Gentile woman when he sees her faith:²²⁸ "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish (Ὡ γύναί, μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις· γενήθῃτω σοι ὡς θέλεις)." This woman is not qualified for any claim on the God of the covenant. But she asks for grace with great faith²²⁹ and her request is finally granted. She clearly understands that salvation comes from the Jews (Jn 4:22): "Even the dog eats the crumbs that fall from their masters' table (v. 27)." As the dog should wait for a crumb from the masters' table, the kingdom and its benefit must be offered first to Israel. Of course, this rule is not to be unbroken as we already saw in the miracle story of a centurion. Jesus has no ethnic boundary in healing as the Messiah; Jesus already showed his willingness to visit a Gentile's house for healing. After all, the Gentiles are not excluded from God's salvation.

The theological issue of this story is that God remains faithful to his covenant with Israel as Jesus twice emphasizes his coming for Israel's lost sheep.²³⁰ Jesus continues his mission to Israel in spite of the severe oppositions from Israel's leaders. Here we can observe Matthew's solid confidence that Israel is at the center of God's salvation. Only when Israel rejects the Messiah by killing him on the cross, God turns to

²²⁸ The apparent rejection of Jesus against the woman's request is not necessarily an anti-Gentile expression. It could be a literary device to increase a dramatic effect to the story. See Kukzin Lee and Francois P. Viljoen, "The Healing of A Canaanite Woman's Daughter (Mt 15L21-28)," in *JECBS* 20 (2009), 77-88.

²²⁹ She does not insist that her case should be an exception for the messianic mercy; instead, she begs allowance of the unexpected crumb of God's mercy to a Gentile dog. This will not disturb Jesus' ministry for Israel.

²³⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 557; J. Julius Scott, Jr., "Gentiles and the Ministry of Jesus: Further Observations on MATT 10:5-6; 15:21-28," in *JETS* 33 (1990), 169.

the Gentiles. Jesus' engagement with the Canaan woman is a precursory signal of this coming grace of God in Mt 28:19.²³¹

Jesus has not confined God within the borders of Israel, but has let himself be moved by the faith of the gentile woman. For the Matthean community that is separated from Israel, this confirmed by Jesus' example the possibility of seeking a new life and a new field of endeavor among the Gentiles.

Mt 15:29-39// Mk 7:31-8:10 The Feeding of the Four Thousand

There have been debates whether the four thousand people of Jesus' feeding story are Jews or Gentiles. According to the analysis of J. R. C. Cousland²³² there are two groups of scholars who support the Jews²³³ and scholars who support the Gentiles.²³⁴ The key issue in solving the problem is 1) topography of Jesus' travels; 2) how to interpret the people's praise of 'God of Israel' in 15:31. Cousland concludes that the recipients of the miracle are the Gentiles based upon (1) the feeding took place on the deserted mountain,

²³¹ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 341.

²³² J.R.C. Cousland, "The Feeding of the Four Thousand *Gentiles* in Matthew? Matthew 15:29-39 As a Test Case," in *NovT* 41 (1999), 1.

²³³ E.g., those by Boring, Davies and Allison, Garland, Gniska, Hagner, Hare, Luz, Sand, *ad be*. Compare the earlier commentaries of Bonnard, Grundmann, Lagrange, Meier, Patte, Plummer, Schweizer, and the monographs by T. Donaldson (*Jesus on the Mountain: A Study in Matthean Theology* [JSNTSS 8; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985] 114), A. J. Levine (*The Social and Ethical Dimensions of Matthean Salvation History* [Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity 14; Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 1988] 163) and W. Trilling (*Das wahre Israel. Studien zur Theologie des Matthäus-Evangeliums* [3. Auf; StANT 10; München: Kosel, 1964] 133-34).

²³⁴ E.g., Blomberg, Bruner, Carson, Davies, France, Morris, Mounce *ad loc*. Harrington leaves the option open. For earlier exponents of this view cf. the commentaries of Argyle, Beare, Fenton, Gaechter, Gundry, Hill, Klostermann, Lohmeyer/Schmauch, McNeile, Schmid, Schniewind, J. Weiss, as well as the monographs by H. Frankemölle (*Jahwebund und Kirche Christi* [NTAbh n.f. 10; Munster: AschendorfT, 1973] 117) and J. Jeremías (*Jesu Verheusung für die Völker* [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1959] 29).

(2) ‘the God of Israel’ seems odd to the mouth of the Jews.²³⁵ Because this miracle happens at a Gentile area, we can say that some Gentiles are included. Although Jesus’ ministry is apparently limited to Israel, he voluntarily performs another miracle to the Gentiles out of mercy just after the Canaan woman (15:21-28). This story illustrates that Jesus’ mercy is not limited to Israel.

Mt 25:31-46 The Final Judgment

In the conclusion of the apocalyptic discourse in Mt 23-25, the criteria for punishment and reward are suggested: helping one of the least ones or not. What is important in this text is that the coming judgment is not limited only to the Jews. In 25:32, Matthew emphasizes that the Gentiles also can receive rewards along with the Jews: “All the nations will be gathered before him [Son of Man] (συναχθήσονται ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη).” This Matthean text shows that the Gentiles can join God’s salvation by helping the disciples in need. This addition of the Gentiles to the judgment objects according to their deeds is important in the salvation history for “it serves to connect the judgment scene with the climactic Gentile mission, which concludes the gospel and reveals the overriding interest of the writer.”²³⁶ By including the Gentiles in the judgment passage, Matthew wants to share the new perspective about the Gentiles with his readers: the Gentiles should stand before the Son of Man because they are also meant to be welcomed.²³⁷

²³⁵ J. R. C. Cousland, “The Feeding of Four Thousand Gentiles in Matthew?: Mattheu 15:29-39 as a Test Case,” in *NovT* 41 (1999), 6-8.

²³⁶ Schuyler Brown, “Faith, the Poor and the Gentiles: A Tradition-Historical Reflection on Matthew 25:31-46,” in *TJT* 6 (1990), 174.

²³⁷ Carson, “Matthew,” 521.

Mt 27:45-56// Mk 15:33-41 The Death on the Cross

Jesus' earthly ministry comes to an end with the death on the cross. As Matthew describes that the Gentiles witnessed the birth of the Messiah and worshipped baby Jesus, he also paints that the centurion and his soldiers witness the death of Jesus and confidently acknowledge that Jesus is truly the Son of God (27:54). They know that there is something in Jesus' death;²³⁸ ironically the death of Jesus proves his divinity to the Gentiles. The portents of darkness, the earthquake and the resurrection of the dead cause them to be terrified and confess Jesus' deity. This acknowledgement of the Gentiles about Jesus' identity is contrasted with the Jews who ridiculed, mocked and finally killed him. Now it is not surprising to see in the coming final scene that Jesus expands his mission to the Gentiles after resurrection; God does not exclude them from salvation and they have already shown faith in Jesus.

Mt 28:16-20 The Great Commission

Matthew's pro-Gentile perspective is climaxed in the Great Commission at the end of the gospel. The universal blessing of Abraham now comes true through the mission of the church: Go and make disciples of all nations (πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη; 28:19). There are two different interpretations about the objects of the mission (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη): 1) all nations including the Jews,²³⁹ 2) all

²³⁸ Morris, *Matthew*, 726.

²³⁹ W. Trilling, *Das wahre Israel: Studien zur Theologie des Matthäusevangeliums* (Leipzig: St. Benno, 1975), 26-28; F. Hahn, *Mission in the New Testament*, trans. F. Clarke (Naperville, IL: Allenson, 1965), 125-28; J. P. Meier, "Nations or Gentiles in Matthew 28:19?" *CBQ* 39 (1977) 94-102; G. Tisera, *Universalism According to the Gospel of Matthew* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1993), 304-6; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 684; H. Kvalbein, "Has Matthew Abandoned the Jews?" J. Adna and H. Kvalbein ed. *The Mission of the Early Church to Jews and Gentiles* (Tübingen: Mohr/ Siebeck, 2000), 54-58; Hagner,

Gentiles excluding the Jews.²⁴⁰ It seems correct that the world mission includes the Jews due to Jesus' universal ruling "to all nations" and not movement from the Jews to the Gentiles. The Jews are included. After the resurrection of Jesus,²⁴¹ his initial ministry which was exclusively focused on the Jews is now turning to the world mission.

Jesus has received all authority in heaven and on earth after the resurrection. He commands his disciples to teach all nations to obey everything he has commanded them. Jesus has the divine authority of controlling the nature and forgiving sins and gave the power of healing to his disciples. There is no change in his authority, power or teaching. Instead, the sphere of his authority, power and teaching is now expanded to the universe of heaven and earth.²⁴² As the resurrected Lord, Jesus now commissions. This marks a turning point in salvation history.²⁴³ Jesus' universal authority changes his disciples' local mission into a universal one.

However, the change is not a simple expansion of Jesus' ministry; the Jews have

Matthew 14-28, 887; Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 615, 628-31; Carson, "Matthew," 596; Gundry, *Matthew*, 595; Nolland, *Matthew*, 1265-66.

²⁴⁰ B. Weiss, *Das Matthäus-Evangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Reprecht, 1898), 508; E. Lohmeyer, "'Mir ist gegeben alle Gewalt!' Eine Exegese von Mt 28, 16-20," Verner Schmauch, ed. *In Memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1951), 36; G. Friedlich, "Die formale Struktur von Mt 28, 16-20," *ZTK* 80 (1983), 179-80; R. Schnackenburg, *Matthäusevangelium*, vol. 2 (Würzburg: Echter, 1987), 290; D. R. A. Hare, *The Theme of Jewish Persecution of Christians in the Gospel according to St. Matthew* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), 147-48; D. Hare and D. Harrington, "'Make Disciples of All the Gentiles' (Matthew 28:19)," *CBQ* 37 (1975), 363-66; R. Walker, *Die Heilsgeschichte im ersten Evangelium* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1967), 111-13; Stephen H. Kio, "Understanding and Translating 'Nations' in Mt 28:19," *BT* 41 (1990), 230-38.

²⁴¹ This shows how Matthew understands Jesus' resurrection. Jesus is exalted as the Lord of all nations through the resurrection. This means that Jesus closed an old time of Jewish mission and opened a new era of world mission. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 19-28*, 688.

²⁴² Carson, "Matthew," 594.

²⁴³ Here we can see the image of Dan 7:13-14, where the Son of Man is given the universal authority after the humiliation.

lost their priority as the chosen people and have become just one among all nations.²⁴⁴

Now that the Jews do not live in Jerusalem any more after 70AD, the main target of the Matthean community's mission is the Gentiles in Syria according to Jesus' command of the universal mission. This implies that the prohibition of the Gentile mission in 10:5-6 is terminated after Jesus' resurrection and a new world mission era is opened. Of course, this turning is not a perfectly new one; as we have already seen above, Matthew frequently foreshadowed the pro-Gentile perspective with a plenty of examples in the previous texts. As Senior comments, Matthew carefully inserts into his gospel "the Gentiles who respond favorably to Jesus and thus become harbingers of Gentile participation in the Christian community in the role of exemplars."²⁴⁵

This change shows the fulfillment of the universal blessing promised to Abraham in Gen 12:3, 18:18, 22:18. Now the universal blessing of Abraham is bringing forth to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Thus the goal of the disciples is to make disciples of all peoples everywhere without any discrimination. Here disciples do not designate only the eleven disciples; Jesus' discipleship is practiced by every person through whom his commandments are kept, whether Jew or Gentile.²⁴⁶ They are the heirs of the heavenly kingdom.

Conclusion

Thus Matthew's readiness to include the Gentiles in Jesus' ministry can be found

²⁴⁴ Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, 887.

²⁴⁵ Senior, "Between Two Worlds: Gentiles and Jewish Christians in Matthew's Gospel," in *CBQ* 61 (1999), 19.

²⁴⁶ Luz, *Matthew 21-28*, 626.

everywhere from the beginning to the end of the gospel. Senior summarizes this tendency as follows;²⁴⁷

Viewed cumulatively, these references to Gentiles [1:1, 2-16; 2:1-12; 4:12-16, 23-26; 8:5-13; 11:20-24; 12:18-21, 38-41; 15:21-28; 20:1-16; 21:43; 22:1-14; 24:14; 25:31-46; 27:19, 54; 28:16-20] are a substantial underlying motif of Matthew's Gospel.....They appear in virtually every major segment of the gospel story: in the opening title of the narrative, in the infancy narrative, at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, at several points in his public ministry in Galilee, during his final teachings in the temple of Jerusalem, in the passion narrative, and in the concluding scene of the gospel.

The Third Stage: Jesus' Mercy in the Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (Mt 8:14-15)

Mk 1:29-31 ²⁹Καὶ εὐθὺς ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς ἐξελθόντες ἦλθον εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Σίμωνος καὶ Ἀνδρέου μετὰ Ἰακώβου καὶ Ἰωάννου (*As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John*). ³⁰ἡ δὲ πενθερὰ Σίμωνος κατέκειτο πυρέσσουσα, καὶ εὐθὺς λέγουσιν αὐτῷ περὶ αὐτῆς (*Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once*). ³¹καὶ προσελθὼν ἤγειρεν αὐτὴν κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς· καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός, καὶ διηκόνει αὐτοῖς (*He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them*).

Mt 8:14-15 ¹⁴Καὶ ἐλθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Πέτρου εἶδεν τὴν πενθερὰν αὐτοῦ βεβλημένην καὶ πυρέσσουσαν (¹⁴*When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever*); ¹⁵καὶ ἥψατο τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός, καὶ ἠγέρθη καὶ διηκόνει αὐτῷ (¹⁵*he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him*).

Introduction

In the third story, Jesus' mercy comes to its climax in a small and private manner. Jesus touches a sick woman's hand in spite of no request of healing. There is nobody who is not significant to Jesus' ministry. Jesus' mercy reaches out weak, silent and forgotten people. Jesus has compassion and suffers heartedly for those people who are suffering

²⁴⁷ Senior, "Between Two Worlds," 16.

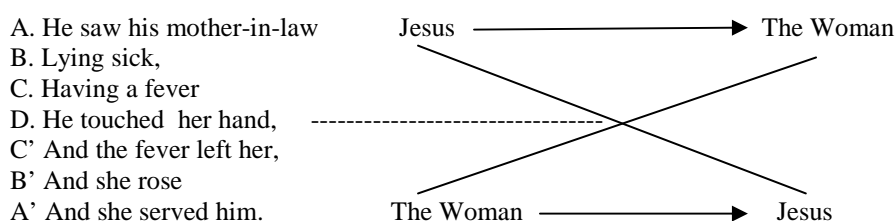
from diseases, and he heals every disease he encounters with as the healing Messiah.

The first overall redaction of Matthew to Mark's story is the way he has changed his structure. We will present this discussion here and then discuss its significance. This story, one of the shortest miracle stories in Matthew 8-9, is composed of two verses.²⁴⁸

But, as Wainwright analyzes, this story has 'the compositional structure of motifs common to miracle stories' (i.e., the introductory motifs – expositional motif – central motif – final motif), the model of which was developed by G. Theissen.²⁴⁹

This story is often analyzed to have a beautiful chiastic structure.²⁵⁰ But there are some differences in detail between the scholars. For example, B. Gerhardsson, Hagner, Turner and Hendrickx follow B. Olsson's chiastic structure, which focuses on Jesus' touch as the turning point.²⁵¹

Figure 2. Olsson's Chiastic structure of Mt 8:14-15



²⁴⁸ H. Hendrickx calls this story "a 'catechetical account' of the effect of the redemption symbolically performed by Jesus" because "Jesus alone acts; the illness is only an opportunity for Jesus' action; there is no dialogue climaxed by a (healing) word of Jesus, contrary to most of Matthew's miracle stories." See his book, *The Miracle Stories* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1987), 78.

²⁴⁹ E. M. Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 180; G. Theissen, *The Miracle Stories of the Early Christian Tradition* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 72-74.

²⁵⁰ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 208-209; B. Olsson, "Att umgås med texter," in *STK 52* (1976), 52-53; Birger Gerhardsson, *Mighty Acts of Jesus according to Matthew* (Lund: University of Lund, 1979), 40-41; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 32; Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 75.

²⁵¹ B. Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts*, 40; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 208-09; B. Olsson, "Att umgås med texter," 52-53; Turner, *Matthew*, 234; Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 75.

Gerhardsson observes a high degree of sophistication in Matthew's redaction of Mark. He finds a short but well organized drama in this short story: "when Jesus comes to a sick person she is saved through the contact with him and becomes his devotee."²⁵² That is Gerhardsson sees the miracle of Jesus' touch as the most important moment. All actions lead to it and all results flow from it. Hagner also sees "the carefully contrived structure upon the material in abbreviating the Markan tradition."²⁵³ But the problem of this analysis is that the supposed parallelism is artificial. According to this analysis, the contrast between Jesus' behavior and that of the woman occurs before and after Jesus' touch. In other words, Jesus' touch becomes the turning point of this chiasmic structure. But this understanding, especially the division of ABC is not natural. Jesus' touch is also Jesus' action like coming and seeing.

Wainwright's chiasmic structure focuses on the fever. According to her, the contrast occurs before and after the departure of the fever.²⁵⁴

Wainwright's Chiasmic Structure of Mt 8:14-15

(In the house of Peter; Καὶ ἔλθων ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Πέτρου)

A. εἶδεν τὴν πενθερὰν αὐτοῦ βεβλημένην καὶ πυρέσσουσαν.	Jesus
B. καὶ ἥψατο τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς,	Jesus
C. καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός,	Fever
B' καὶ ἡγέρθη	Woman
A' καὶ διηκόνει αὐτῷ.	Woman

A series of Jesus' behaviors (seeing and touching) brings a healing of the fever and the

²⁵² Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts*, 41.

²⁵³ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 209.

²⁵⁴ Wainwright, *Feminist Reading*, 84.

healing brings a series of the woman's behaviors (getting up and serving). Clearly this analysis gives a better explanation about the contrast between Jesus' behaviors before the healing of the fever and the woman's behaviors after the healing. But this analysis neglects Jesus' coming to Peter's house as a setting of the story.

Meanwhile, Davies and Allison give attention to Matthew's love of triad. According to them, Matthew divides the story into two halves: Jesus' action and the result.²⁵⁵

The Triadic Structure of Mt8:14-15

8.14-5a	Jesus' actions
8.14a	He comes into the house
8.14b	He sees Peter's mother-in-law
8.15a	He touches her hand
8.15b-d	The result
8.15b	The fever leaves
8.15c	The woman rises
8.15d	The woman serves Jesus

Davies and Allison focus on the six main verbs: three main verbs associated with Jesus (come – see – touch) and the three main verbs associated with the woman and her healing (leave – get up – serve).²⁵⁶

The structure of Wainwright and that of Davies & Allison have their limits in finding the main theme. Wainwright focuses on the cure of the fever and Davies and Allison accentuate the contrast between Jesus' actions and the result. However, Wainwright's analysis misses the core (i.e., Jesus) of the story by focusing on the healing

²⁵⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 32.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

of the fever and the model of Davies and Allison loses the sophisticated parallelism in this story. The story's structure may be modified as having an ABCC'B'A,' i.e., Matthew's Three Stage Progression structure as follows.

MTSP Structure of Mt 8:14-15

A. Καὶ ἔλθων ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Πέτρου
 B. εἶδεν τὴν πενθερὰν αὐτοῦ βεβλημένην καὶ πυρέσσουσαν·
 C. καὶ ἥψατο τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς,
 C' καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός,
 B' καὶ ἠγέρθη
 A' καὶ διηκόνει αὐτῷ.

This structure has some strong points in explaining the story's theme. First of all, this structure emphasizes on Jesus' power over the disease (CC'). When Jesus touches the woman's hand, the fever leaves her. This theme is prevailing in the whole miracle stories, and especially over the first cluster. This theme is explained why Jesus comes to this world: to take our infirmities and carry out our diseases (8:17).

Second, each parallel (AA', BB' and CC') shows a good contrast. In AA' parallels, Jesus visits Peter's house (A) to be served (A'). When Jesus fixes the problem in BB' and CC', the woman continues to serve Jesus. In BB' parallels, the woman is lying with fever, but she soon gets up when Jesus heals her fever. In CC' parallels, Jesus touches her and immediately the fever leaves her.

Third, we can observe two cycles of MTSP structures. When Jesus comes to Peter's house, he sees his mother-in-law lying with fever and touches her hand. This structure is composed according to a logical order (come – see – touch). Of course, the climax is Jesus' touching of the woman in fever. The result of Jesus' action is also arranged according to the development of the story. Jesus' touch brought immediate

healing (the leave of the fever), and she could get up by herself without any help. Then, she could serve Jesus without any pain as expected at the beginning of the story. In the analysis of this story, we will use this MTSP model.

Jesus' Compacted Action

Α Καὶ ἐλθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Πέτρου (when Jesus entered Peter's house)

Mk 1:29 Καὶ εὐθὺς ἐκ τῆς συναγωγῆς ἐξελθόντες ἦλθον εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν Σίμωνος καὶ Ἀνδρέου μετὰ Ἰακώβου καὶ Ἰωάννου (As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John).

In Mark the story begins with coming from the synagogue, where Jesus healed a person with an unclean spirit. However, in Matthew Jesus comes to Peter's house in Capernaum after healing a centurion's servant. In this scene we cannot see any people such as the disciple or the crowd except Jesus. Here only Jesus is emphasized. While in Mark Jesus' name is not used, Matthew starts the sentence with Jesus' name. This gives the impression that only Jesus is entering Peter's house. The effect that only Jesus' name is used here is the simplification of the story.

Β εἶδεν τὴν πενθερὰν αὐτοῦ βεβλημένην καὶ πυρέσσουσαν (He saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever)

Mk 1:30 ἡ δὲ πενθερὰ Σίμωνος κατέκειτο πυρέσσουσα, καὶ εὐθὺς λέγουσιν αὐτῷ περὶ αὐτῆς (Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once).

When Jesus enters Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying with a fever. If she is not sick, she would be probably standing while serving the guests including Jesus. But the expectation is broken. The story gives the impression that Jesus comes directly to the woman, because he knows that she is sick. Even though no intercession is made, Jesus acknowledges her illness: she is lying in bed with a fever. This leads Jesus to

become the initiator.

According to Theissen, Mark and Luke generally tend to have three fields of principal characters, subsidiary characters and miracle-worker, but Matthew frequently empties the field of subsidiary character.²⁵⁷ In the Matthean story of Peter's mother-in-law, Jesus' followers and the disciples (i.e., the subsidiary characters)²⁵⁸ are absent. The effect of this reduction of subsidiary characters is a reduction of the intercession of the disciples requesting Jesus to heal the woman.²⁵⁹

These cuts are not accidental; a Jesus who engages in conversation does not fit the picture of the miracle-worker who acts with divine authority. Jesus does not ask questions, does not discuss, does not issue orders through intermediaries; he makes summary, firm decisions.

Because a divine miracle worker has complete knowledge and power, he does not need any help. By compressing the miracle stories by focusing on the miracle worker, Matthew can emphasize more strongly the sovereignty of Jesus.

The seriousness of the fever in the first century tends to be ignored. A fever is a lethal disease which is easily associated with death.²⁶⁰ This serious disease could be a matter of life or death to Peter's mother-in-law, even though the text is silent about the

²⁵⁷ Theissen, *The Miracle Stories*, 178.

²⁵⁸ The four disciples of Mark are those whom Jesus chose first in Mk 1:16-20. Matthew 4:18-22 also describes the event of choosing the four disciples, but Matthew omits the four disciples in the healing story of Peter's mother-in-law.

²⁵⁹ Theissen, *The Miracle Stories*, 179.

²⁶⁰ Von Bendemann, "Many-Colored Illness," 105-6.

seriousness of her disease.²⁶¹ The fever is a physical disease which shows our weakness like leprosy or paralysis to the author of Matthew.²⁶² As a fever is called ‘fire in the bones’ in some rabbinic literature,²⁶³ Jesus is watching a woman being fired in her bone, but his watching is not that of disinterest but that of mercy. He is not waiting for any intercession or request. He takes the initiative.²⁶⁴ This miracle story is something humble, quite, private and lowly. It shows that Jesus does not have to be with men and dramatic miracles. Jesus is compassionate and merciful.

C. καὶ ἥψατο τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς (He touched her hand).

Mk 1:31a καὶ προσελθὼν ἥγειρεν αὐτὴν κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς (He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up).

In Mark, Jesus did not see Peter’s mother-in-law until his disciples told him about her. Only when he heard about the woman, did Jesus come to her bed. Then Jesus took her hand and lifts her up (ἥγειρεν αὐτὴν κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς). However, in Matthew, Jesus comes straight to her bed without any intervention and touches her hand (ἥψατο τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς). This is the climax of Jesus’ action (come – see – touch).

Jesus’ action of touching the woman has two aspects. One of them is that Jesus’

²⁶¹ Luke emphasizes the seriousness by adding ‘high (μεγάλῳ)’ to the fever. In addition, fever does not only impact the individual but also the society. Fever can reduce the value of a slave and makes an excuse for absence from a court. See Von Bendemann, “Many-Colored Illness,” 106.

²⁶² Theissen also understands fever as weakness (ἀσθενεία). See his book, *Miracle Stories*, 62. This is related with the theme of the first cluster as we will discuss later. The theme of the first cluster is that Jesus takes up our infirmities and carries our diseases (8:17).

²⁶³ For detail, see Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 340; Xavier Leon-Dufour, *Dictionnaire du Nouveau Testament*, 258.

²⁶⁴ Gundry, *Matthew*, 148; Warrington, *Jesus the Healer*, 43; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 209; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 13; Nolland, *Matthew*, 358; Morris, *Matthew*, 197; Turner, *Matthew*, 234.

touch demonstrates his mercy. For most people, senior women would not be seen as important. What she shares with the leper and the centurion is a marginalization socially.²⁶⁵ The subordinate position of women in the first century is well known. She is not named in the story, but this social boundary is not Jesus' concern. Matthew's Jesus treats the elderly woman more gently with mercy.

Another aspect of Jesus' touch is that it reveals Jesus' authority over the disease.²⁶⁶ Jesus simply touches the woman's hand to heal her. This is probably because Matthew wanted to correct Jesus' image about healing power in Mark. In Mark, Jesus takes her hand and lifts her up (ἤγειρεν αὐτήν κρατήσας τῆς χειρός), but this gives the impression that the healing occurs when Jesus coercively raises her up; in other words, the cure becomes noticeable after raising up.²⁶⁷ However, Matthew's Jesus merely touches the woman's hand (ἥψατο τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς), and the touch perfectly brings back her health enough for the woman to get up by herself and serve Jesus. Clearly Matthew's description about Jesus' healing power gives the impression of more powerful authority to Jesus.

The Result of Jesus' Action

The results of Jesus' action (come – see – touch) are arranged progressively according to the order of occurrences. When Jesus touches the woman, the fever leaves her. When the fever leaves her, she gets up by herself. When she arises, she begins to

²⁶⁵ Vledder, *Conflict*, 184; Wainwright, *A Feminist Critical Reading*, 84; Hare, *Matthew*, 92; Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 307-8.

²⁶⁶ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 208.

²⁶⁷ Gundry, *Matthew*, 148.

serve Jesus. All those results occur almost at the same time; but they are arranged progressively to emphasize Jesus' authoritative healing.

C'. καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός (And the fever left her)
Mk 1:31b καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυρετός (then the fever left her).

B' καὶ ἤγερθη (And she got up).
Mk 1:31 No parallel.

Those two sections confirm Jesus' miracle. As soon as Jesus touches the woman's hand, the fever is gone and now the woman is able to get up on her own power. Jesus' healing is immediate and perfect. She was lying because of the fever before Jesus' touch (B), but now she got up by herself (B').

In the C' parallel, Matthew copies the Markan text. Here he emphasizes that the healing is immediate. As soon as Jesus touches the woman, the fever is gone. Here the word "leave (ἀφῆκεν)" had better be interpreted as a metaphorical expression personifying the fever rather than an expression of exorcism.²⁶⁸ While this word itself is ambiguous,²⁶⁹ the context supports metaphorical interpretation: 1) Jesus does not rebuke, 2) Jesus merely touches the woman's hand. As Jesus touches the woman's hand, now the fever is gone as the parallel. The proof that the fever left the woman is to come in the next stage.

In the B' parallel, Matthew clarifies that the woman arises by herself (cf. 9:19).²⁷⁰ This emphasizes the perfect healing of Jesus at a simple touch. However, by using the

²⁶⁸ Nolland, *Matthew*, 359.

²⁶⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 35.

²⁷⁰ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 35; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 208.

passive form (ἡγήροθη) of ἐγείρω, the fact is also emphasized that ultimately Jesus has raised her up.²⁷¹ In Mark, grabbing her hand and lifting her up is the preliminary behavior of the healing; in Matthew touch is the pre-condition of healing. As the result of the healing, the woman can get up without Jesus' action of lifting up. As the result of that, the woman is not only healed completely but also recovered to her full vigor.²⁷² While Jesus saw the woman lying in bed before the healing, Now Jesus is seeing the woman arising by herself as the parallel.

A'. καὶ διηκόνει αὐτῷ (And began to serve him)

Mk 1:31b καὶ διηκόνει αὐτοῖς. (and she began to serve them).

Now the woman's health is recovered enough to serve. When Jesus came to Peter's house, the woman was lying on bed (A). Now she can resume what she could not do when Jesus came (A').²⁷³

The woman's service reveals two things. First, it proves the woman's complete and quick restoration: full health and vigor.²⁷⁴ After Jesus' touch, the woman is able to not only get up by herself but also serve Jesus. This demonstrates her perfect recovery and therefore Jesus' sovereign authority over the disease.

Second, she is a precursor of an ideal feminine model of service. The motif of the woman's service is gratitude for Jesus' merciful healing. Matthew changes 'them (the

²⁷¹ Nolland, *Matthew*, 359.

²⁷² Morris, *Matthew*, 197; Turner, *Matthew*, 234.

²⁷³ Nolland, *Matthew*, 359. This sentence makes a perfect parallel with A ("When Jesus came to Peter's house").

²⁷⁴ Davis and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 32.

disciples; αὐτοῖς)’ of Mark 1:31 into ‘him (Jesus; αὐτῷ).’ The woman’s service is focused only on Jesus. The feminine service to Jesus emerges in 27:55 as an important activity to Jesus’ ministry.²⁷⁵

Summary of Redactional Changes of 8:14-15

Jesus’ mercy as the healing Messiah is highlighted in the third story. His mercy is given even to forgotten people; everyone is significant to Jesus’ ministry. It is not God’s will to lose any of little ones (18:14). Jesus has compassion for those who suffer, and he heals every disease he encounters with. Jesus’ status comes from his being presented as the fulfillment of Isa 53:4.

This story shows some special features as the third miracle story. First of all, this story is located in a different context from that of Mark. In Mark, this story (1:29-31) follows the story of Jesus’ exorcism of a man with an unclean spirit in Capernaum (1:21-28). Those two stories occur on the first day of Jesus’ public life in Galilee. On the Sabbath day Jesus heals a paralytic in the synagogue of Capernaum and then comes to Peter’s house to heal his mother-in-law. Those two stories are two concrete examples of exorcism (1:21-28) and healing (1:29-31) of the conclusion in vs. 32-34: “Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons.” However, in Matthew, those two miracles are arranged into different clusters so that they have perfectly different contexts and roles. Finding the reason why those two stories are relocated as they are in Matthew is important in understanding the intention of the author as we will explain later.

Second, as usual, Matthew abbreviated much part of Mark’s story so that the

²⁷⁵ Vledder, *Conflict*, 184.

focus is on Jesus alone. All descriptions about disciples are omitted so that Jesus alone comes to Peter's house. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law in spite of no request from her or the disciples as in Mark 1:29-31. Jesus is also described merely to touch the hand of Peter's mother-in-law instead of grasping her hand and lifting her up. Jesus is shown to be very gentle and respectful in his treatment. The result of this abbreviation is the story's heavy concentration on Jesus.²⁷⁶ While Mark never uses the name of Jesus in this pericope, Jesus is the subject of the first three main verbs in Matthew. After Jesus comes, sees and touches Peter's mother-in-law, she is cured, gets up and serves Jesus. Matthew's abbreviation of Mark has not only formal causes but also reflects theological thoughts as we will discuss below.²⁷⁷

Third, Jesus' mercy is also emphasized in this story. When Jesus sees the woman lying in bed with a fever, he heals her by touching her hand without hesitation.²⁷⁸ Jesus, full of compassion to the sinners, does not wait for the request. In addition, Jesus' healing was done secretly. The text describes that there is nobody in the room except Jesus and the woman. Nobody asked Jesus to heal the woman, and nobody saw the miracle. Only the woman knows about it. This shows Jesus' compassion to everyone who has infirmity or disease regardless of gender or request.

Fourth, there is no limit in Jesus' authority over diseases. Jesus' healing method does not matter. Sometimes Jesus touches and speaks, or speaks at a distance to heal the

²⁷⁶ Luz calls this story 'a pure Jesus story.' See his book, *Matthew 8-20*, 13.

²⁷⁷ Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 170.

²⁷⁸ Some rabbinic literatures say that a woman with a fever should not be touched. See Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 209; Warrington, *Jesus the Healer*, 43.

patients. This time Jesus simply touches the woman's hand, but it results in another amazing healing.

In sum, Jesus' mercy extends to marginalized and forgotten people. He heals every disease he encounters with as the merciful healing Messiah, whether he or she asks or not.

Conclusion: Mt 8:16-17// Mk 1:32-34

¹⁶Οψίας δὲ γενομένης προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δαιμονιζομένους πολλούς· καὶ ἐξέβαλεν τὰ πνεύματα λόγῳ καὶ πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ἐθεράπευσεν. ¹⁷Ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος, Αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν

¹⁶*That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick.* ¹⁷*This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."*

This section closes a long day of activity both in Mark and in Matthew, except for Matthew the day starts with the Sermon on the Mount and is being finished with a summary of Jesus' exorcisms and healings in evening. It is the summary or conclusion of the first cluster of the miracle stories like Mark 1:29-31.²⁷⁹ In the same manner, the conclusion follows the story of Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law.

But they are significantly different in contents.²⁸⁰ If Mark 1:32-34 concludes with Jesus' silencing of the demons, the first explanation of the Messianic secret,²⁸¹ in

²⁷⁹ So Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 161-62; Vledder, *Conflict*, 185; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 145; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 35; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 14; B. Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts of Jesus according to Matthew* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1979), 24. However, some scholars such as Wainwright or Meier classify Mt 8:16-17 as a buffer pericope linking the first and second clusters. See Wainwright, *Towards a Feminist Reading*, 81; Meier, *Matthew*, 86.

²⁸⁰ Only 6 out of Matthew's 36 words can be found in Mark. Morris, *Matthew*, 197.

Matthew this section completely avoids that focus and instead supplies a fulfillment text designed to reveal in part the identity of Jesus as s “the promised Messiah, a living fulfillment of Isaiah 53:4.”²⁸² The mission of the Messiah is taking our infirmities and carrying out our diseases. Jesus performs this mission through a lot of exorcisms and healings. The three miracle stories in Mt 8:1-15 provide concrete examples for Matthew’s claim that Jesus is the promised Messiah who would free us from our diseases.

¹⁶ Ὁψίας δὲ γενομένης προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ δαιμονιζομένους πολλούς· καὶ ἐξέβαλεν τὰ πνεύματα λόγῳ καὶ πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ἐθεράπευσεν (That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick).

At the end of the first day (ὁψίας), many demon-possessed patients are brought to Jesus. In Mark, the evening closes the Sabbath, and many people had been waiting because they could not involve themselves in the work of bringing their needy on the Sabbath, but would be obliged to rest.²⁸³ But in Matthew, Jesus worked all day long on the mount, on the way from the mount, in Capernaum and at Peter’s house. This busy and long day finally ends (probably in front of Peter’s house). We note that while Mark states that Jesus healed “many”, Matthew is deliberate then in claiming that he healed “all.” Moreover, Matthew changes the order in which the needy are mentioned, so that the demon possessed are followed by the sick. In this way, the last statement to be made will be that Jesus healed ‘all’, rather than Mark’s emphasis on the silencing of demons.

²⁸¹ The reason why Matthew omitted this part will be explained in the third cluster. While Hagner explains that this omission was done ‘because of the distraction from the main points’ (*Matthew 1-13*, 208), that explanation is not satisfactory. The omission of Mark 1:34 along with Mark 1:45 in the first cluster provides an important clue for the structure of Matthew 8-9.

²⁸² Warrington, *Jesus the Healer*, 43. See also Hendrickx, *The Miracle Stories*, 79.

²⁸³ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 144.

Jesus heals all of them without exception.

As Luz explains, Matthew 8:17 performs a threefold function.²⁸⁴ First of all, v. 16 shows that three miracle examples in Mt 8:1-15 are just three examples of a large number of healings and exorcisms which Jesus performed at the first day. Here, Luz offers the reason for Matthew's choice of three miracles as an antecedent to the claim to Messiahship is to fulfill Leviticus 26:16 as seen above: "I will bring upon you trembling [בְּהִלָּה; like the paralytic's], wasting disease [רָעָה; like the leper's], and recurrent fever [קָדַח; like Peter's mother-in-law] –plagues that will dim your eyes and steal your breath."²⁸⁵ Those three diseases then, represent all infirmities and diseases. Jesus' mission to heal our infirmities and diseases continues day and night. Wherever he goes, he meets patients in need. In this verse we can confirm Jesus' fame as a healer for all people.

Second, v. 16 reveals Jesus' sovereign authority over all diseases. As mentioned above, Mark claims healing only for 'many' (v. 34a) as though there were some diseases that Jesus could not heal. However, to Matthew, there is no disease that Jesus cannot heal. Thus Matthew says that 'many who were possessed with demons (οὐλοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ποικίλαις νόσοις καὶ δαιμόνια πολλὰ ἐξέβαλεν)' were brought to Jesus, and Jesus healed 'all who were sick (πάντας τοὺς κακῶς).' Matthew's redaction emphasizes the universal application of Jesus' healing.²⁸⁶ There is no limit in Jesus' healing ministry.

Third, this verse prepares for the quotation in v.17, which explains the significance of Jesus power to completely heal all who came. In Jesus' healing activity,

²⁸⁴ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 19.

²⁸⁵ Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 340.

²⁸⁶ Hagner, *Matthew* 1-13, 210.

Matthew finds a divine purpose which is written in the Scripture.²⁸⁷ The Christological focus of Matthew is away from some theme of hiding Jesus' identity and reason for power. Instead of prohibiting the demons from revealing Jesus' identity, Matthew quotes Isa 53:4, which explains why Jesus performs a large number of exorcisms and healings: 'in order that the prophecy of Isaiah Prophet should be fulfilled (ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου).' After all, the ultimate purpose of Jesus' universal healing mission and sovereign authority in Matthew 1-16 is to fulfill Isa 53:4.

¹⁷ ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος, Αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν (This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases").

The fulfillment formula quotation is one of the most distinctive features of Matthew that are frequently found in the Gospel of Matthew.²⁸⁸ The fulfillment quotations of OT prophecies are found 10 times in Matthew (1:22-23; 2:15, 17-18, 23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 21:4-5; 27:9-10): "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet...(ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν δια)." The purpose of this quotation is Matthew's creative interpretation that the related narrative is done for the fulfillment of the quoted OT prophecies.²⁸⁹ Those quotations are basically Christocentric. Their starting point is that Jesus is the Messiah promised by OT and Jesus faithfully fulfills what God has promised in OT.²⁹⁰ Mt 8:17 is an example of the formula quotation which

²⁸⁷ Morris, *Matthew*, 198.

²⁸⁸ Nolland, *Matthew*, 23-24.

²⁸⁹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, liv.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, lvi.

demonstrates that Jesus' activity in Mt 8:1-16 is to fulfill the prophecy in Isa 53:4.

While the OT Scriptures in the other synoptic gospels are generally quoted from the Septuagint, the formula quotations show a mixed text form. It is generally agreed that 8:17 comes directly from the Hebrew Scriptures (or at least his own).²⁹¹ The text reflects the Hebrew text (אֶבֶן חֲלִינִי הוּא נָשָׂא וּמַכְאִבֵּינוּ סִבְלָם) more than the Septuagint text (οὗτος τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾷται). Matthew emphasizes the healing of diseases like the Hebrew text rather than any removal of our sin or spiritual healing like the Septuagint. This is what Matthew already narrated in the preceding text. Jesus was described as the Messiah healing all kinds of diseases.

However, when Matthew quotes the Hebrew Scriptures, he ignores the context in which it is found. In Isaiah the Servant suffers vicariously, bearing our sickness and pains on himself; in Matthew Jesus heals our physical weakness by taking away infirmities and diseases.²⁹² This is far from any mistake on Matthew's part, of course; only 6 out of Matthew's 36 words can be found in Mark: "A reasoned practice that assumes a divinely intended correspondence between God's saving activities at different times in the history of redemption."²⁹³ In other words, Matthew understands that the true meaning of the text hidden to the original writer is revealed through the fulfillment at a certain point of time in the redemptive history. This kind of interpretation was practiced by the Jews as well as

²⁹¹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 37; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 208; Morris, *Matthew*, 198; Nolland, *Matthew*, 361; Gundry, *Matthew*, 150.

²⁹² Gerhardsson, *The Mighty Acts*, 25; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 38 ; Nolland, *Matthew*, 361; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 210.

²⁹³ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, lvi.

the early Christians.²⁹⁴ The common factor of Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:17 is that the servant (i.e., Jesus) heals all kinds of diseases.

This quotation supports Matthew's main concern that Jesus' authority comes from God. Jesus' healing ministry exactly corresponds to God's plan prophesied by Isaiah the prophet. Here Matthew emphasizes that Jesus, as Israel's Messiah, heals God's people with full authorization by God.²⁹⁵ Jesus' healing mission is not for his private popularity or fame, but according to God's will. This quotation may be called the legitimization of Jesus' deeds and thus his position by appealing to the widely accepted and authoritative Scripture.²⁹⁶

In sum, the conclusion of Matthew 8:16-17 emphasizes Jesus' messianic authority but not merely Jesus' healing mission itself. Because the main concern of Matthew is on the person of Jesus not his healing activity itself, this conclusion is basically Christocentric. The disease comes from sin and thus healing is not the final goal of salvation. Sin is the real enemy of Jesus to be conquered by the end of the story. Jesus' death on the cross is for the forgiveness of sins (26:28), and he came for this with the name of Jesus: "he will save his people from their sins (1:21)."

Conclusion of the First Cluster

The first cluster has its own three stage progression. As the merciful healing Messiah in Isa 53:4 (Mt 8:17), he heals every disease he encounters with to fulfill the

²⁹⁴ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 14; Hagner, *Matthew* 1-13, lvi.

²⁹⁵ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 14; Morris, *Matthew*, 198; Turner, *Matthew*, 236; Hare, *Matthew*, 93.

²⁹⁶ Vledder, *Conflict*, 185.

Scripture. To emphasize Jesus' mercy, Matthew arranges three miracle stories progressively in three stages. In the first stage, he illustrates that Jesus put mercy over the law through the healing story of a leper. Jesus does not hesitate touching the leper in spite of the prohibition of the law. In the second stage, Matthew demonstrates that Jesus' mercy is not limited to the Jews. At the request of a centurion, Jesus showed his willingness to go to the Gentile's house to heal his servant. This shows that Jesus put mercy over any ethnic boundary. In the third stage, Matthew draws that Jesus does not wait for the solicitation. He takes the initiative of touching the sick mother-in-law of Peter. This shows that Jesus feels sympathy to the forgotten and marginalized people regardless of their social status. Through these escalating three miracle stories, Matthew proved that Jesus is the merciful healing Messiah. These three stages may be summarized as follows:

The First Cluster (Matthew 8:2-17): "Jesus, the Merciful Healing Messiah"

- A. Jesus shows his mercy by touching the leper (Matt 8:1-4)
- B. Jesus is willing to go to the centurion's house for his mercy is not limited to the Jews (Matt 8:5-13)
- C. Jesus' mercy includes all weak and forgotten people (Matt 8:14- 15)
- * Conclusion: Jesus is the merciful healing Messiah of Isa 53:4 (Matt 8:16-17)

CHAPTER FIVE

MTSP IN THE SECOND CLUSTER

The Preface to the Cluster: The First of the Intervening Pericopae (Mt 8:18-22)

Introduction: Matthew's Intervening Pericopae 8:18-22

In the discussion of Matthew's ascending progression in Jesus' identity through the three clusters of miracle stories, it must be acknowledged that he divides them by means of two intervening narrative pericopae, what John Meier terms 'buffers.'¹ With all respect we would say that a close examination of the way which Matthew has chosen the material for these intervening pericopae and their placements is for more than to offset the three clusters in the manner of a 'buffer.' In Chapter Two of the dissertation, the History of the Research, it was observed how difficult scholars find their thematic approaches to fit once these intervening pericopae are included in the examination. These intervening pericopae must be given their own examination for the way in which they function in relation to the gospel agenda of Matthew, and so we will pause here and again, before the treatment of the third cluster, to acknowledge the manner in which Matthew has positioned this material in service to the overall development of the gospel.

The Structure of the Two Intervening Pericopae

¹ Meier seems the first person who uses the word 'buffer.' See his commentary, *Matthew* (Wilmington, DL: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1980), 80. Wainwright (*Towards A Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew*, 80) and Davies & Allison (*Matthew 8-18*, 6) also use this terminology. Davies and Allison call the buffer as 'boundary marker,' which explains its function in the nine miracle collection. This marker has the same function as the buffer in the structure of Matthew 8-9 (*Matthew 8-18*, 6).

[The first Cluster of Miracle Stories: Matt 8:1-9:17]

- A. The First Intervening Pericopae (8:19-22): Two Examples of the Cost of Discipleship
 - a. A Scribe asks to be a Disciple: “The Son of Man has no place to lay his head” (8:19-20)
 - b. A Disciple Asks to Go Home to Care for his Parents: “Let the Dead bury their own dead” (8:21-22)

[The Second Cluster of Miracle Stories: Matt 8:23- 9:8]

- B. The Second Intervening Pericopae (9:9-17): Two Examples of Unconventional Jesus as Master of Disciples
 - a. Jesus Calls a Tax-Collector to Discipleship: Jesus has come to call sinners (9:9-13)
 - b. Jesus Proposes a New Kind of Discipleship Training: New wine into new wineskins (9:14-17)

[The Third Cluster of Miracle Stories: Matt 9:18-35]

Here one can see that the first set simply addresses the difficulty of discipleship, while the second attests Jesus readiness to call to discipleship those whose society would spurn. Very interestingly, Janice C. Anderson has illustrated in her monograph, *Matthew’s Narrative Web: Over and Over and Over Again*, that Matthew initiates a theme or issue, only to show it completed, and fulfilled later, so that the listener is invited to reflect on its meaning. For Anderson this is a main organizational device of Matthew seen in the development of the gospel.² For example, Matthew’s appeal to Isaiah 7:14, in Matt 1:23 where Jesus is to be called Emmanuel (God with Us), finds its full expression in the Great Commission in Matt 28:20 bcd: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

² Janice C. Anderson, *Matthew’s Narrative Web: Over, and Over, and Over Again* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 152. See also Gundry, *Matthew*, 226-7. Gundry explains why Matthew replaced a son’s or an ox’s falling into a well (Luke 14:5) into a sheep’s falling into a pit: anticipation of the parable of the lost sheep (18:12-14) and the saying about falling into a pit (15:14).

Actually, one can see that the first intervening pericopae raise the issue of the cost of discipleship (Matt 8:19-22) which anticipates the Mission Speech of Matt 10, where the disciples will be required to be itinerant, poor and homeless. Likewise the second address of discipleship as open to tax collectors and others who would be considered less than appropriate prepare for Jesus' thanksgiving to God for these "little ones" over against the "wise and intelligent" (11:25-30), and for his defense of them when they are criticized by the Pharisees for not keeping the law on the Sabbath (12:1-8).

Thus the progression in the discipleship addresses through the intervening pericopae show their progression.³ They both prepare for the Great Mission Speech, which Matthew has placed immediately following the three miracle clusters.⁴

Having paused to give an overview of the way in which the two intervening pericopae function as more than simply "buffers", we preface our discussion of the second miracle cluster with a more attentive treatment of the first intervening pericopae which Matthew himself has situated between the clusters.

The First Intervening Pericopae: Two Chreiai on the Cost of Discipleship

A Scribe's Request to Follow Jesus (8:19-20)

Matt 8:19-20 ¹⁹Καὶ προσελθὼν εἰς γραμματεὺς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· Διδάσκαλέ ⁵
ἀκολουθήσω σοι ὅπου ἐὰν ἀπέρχῃ ²⁰καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· Αἱ ἀλώπεκες φωλεοὺς
ἔχουσι καὶ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατασκηνώσει· ὁ δὲ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἔχει
ποῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν κλίνει (¹⁹*A scribe then approached and said, "Teacher I will follow*

³ This progressive arrangement of the two intervening pericopae was observed by W. Cotter c.s.j during our discussion.

⁴ Although it is not clear whether we can call these three sections on discipleship a MNTP structure, the progressive arrangement clearly shows the same technique.

⁵ The scribe calls Jesus 'teacher' instead of 'Lord,' which shows that he is not yet a disciple. Although its nuance is not negative, it implies an insufficient understanding of Jesus. See Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 216; Morris, *Matthew*, 200; Nolland, *Matthew*, 364-65.

you wherever you go.” ²⁰*Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head).*

Q 9:57-58 ⁵⁷καὶ εἶπέν τις αὐτῷ· ἀκολουθήσω σοι ὅπου ἐὰν ἀπέρχῃ . ⁵⁸καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· αἱ ἀλώπεκες φωλεοὺς ἔχουσιν καὶ τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατασκηνώσεις , ὁ δὲ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐχ ἔχει ποῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν κλίνει (⁵⁷*And someone said to him: I will follow you wherever you go.* ⁵⁸*And Jesus said to him: Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head).*

In this first pericopae Matthew has redacted Q so that it is a Scribe who asks Jesus to be a disciple. The first set of miracle stories has concluded with the appeal to Isaiah 53:4, “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.” This “fulfillment” passage in Matthew, followed by the scribe asking for discipleship cannot be accidental but suggests that the Scribe saw a fulfillment in Jesus. Up until this point in the gospel, the Scribes have appeared three times. They are the ones with whom Herod confers about where the Messiah is to be born (Matt 2:4). They are used as a criterion of righteousness by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:20) and they are used as a negative contrast when the people praise Jesus form of teaching, which is “not like the Scribes” (Matt 7:29). So at this point of Matthew’s gospel for a scribe to ask for discipleship brings out the plain superiority of Jesus as a recognized spiritual leader at the very least. Matthew’s choice of a scribe to hear this answer of Jesus cautioning that this life will be without comforts, is shown to stand on good ground in Matthew 23:6-7 (Mk 12:38-39), where they are presented as money hungry and power hungry. At the same time, Matt 13:52 presents the ideal of discipleship as a scribe ‘trained for the kingdom.’ Yet the castigations of the way the practice of the scribes in Jesus’ day, contrasted with their intended role explains

Jesus' caution to this man. He does not understand what discipleship will mean.⁶ From now on, the Scribes in the gospel will show themselves to be accusatory, falsely fervent, and eager for Jesus' death.⁷

A Disciple's Request to Bury His Father (Matt 9:21-22)

Matt 9:21-22 ²¹ἄλλος δὲ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· κύριε⁸ ἐπίτρεψόν μοι πρῶτον ἀπελθεῖν καὶ θάψαι τὸν πατέρα μου ²²ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἀκολούθει μοί καὶ ἄφες τοὺς νεκροὺς θάψαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκρούς (²¹*Another of his disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."* ²²*But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead"*).

Q 9:59-60 ⁵⁹ἄλλος εἶπεν αὐτῷ· κύριε, ἐπίτρεψόν μοι πρῶτον ἀπελθεῖν καὶ θάψαι τὸν πατέρα μου. ⁶⁰εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ· ἀκολούθει μοι καὶ ἄφες τοὺς νεκροὺς θάψαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκρούς (⁵⁹*But another said to him, "Master [Lord] permit me first to go and bury my father."* ⁶⁰*But he said to him: Follow me and leave the dead to bury their dead"*).

In Matthew's use of this chreia, already connected to the first in Q, his redaction is found in identifying the one who requests the favor from Jesus. In the Q version it is some other person who also wishes to become a disciple but only after he takes care of his father. Matthew has created another scenario. The first petitioner was a Scribe, one of the religious elite who Jesus cautions on the grounds of the difficulty of the discipleship. Now the second petitioner is one of Jesus' own disciples. This changes matters. The man has already made his commitment to follow Jesus, and to live without anywhere to lay his head. But now he wants Jesus to give him leave of absence on the grounds that he needs to take care of his father. In this case, Matthew is addressing the

⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 152; Hare, *Matthew*, 94; France, *Matthew*, 160; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 147; Hagner, *Matthew*, 216; Morris, *Matthew*, 200-201.

⁷ See Matthew 9:3, 12:38; 15:1; 16:21; 17:10; 20:18; 21:15; 23:2, 13, 14, 15, 34; 26:57; 27:41.

⁸ Whether the Q reconstruction is correct in granting the "κύριε" to Q, the presence of this title exactly coheres with Matthew's custom of a disciples knowing to address Jesus as Lord, never "Teacher", as Matthew has the scribe address Jesus.

cost of constant separation from family and home. Thus Jesus' words, hard as they are, face the disciple with the choice he made. He must leave all that behind him, and keep on course.

Kaufman Kohler notes that Jesus' words have been judged as "both cruel and senseless" or even 'scandalous,'⁹ since in antiquity it was a serious failure of a children's obligation to their parents. This prohibition shows a good contrast with 1 Kings 19:19-21, in which Elijah let Elisha go to his parents to say farewell.

Some scholars have sought an answer in identifying the "dead" to whom Jesus refers. Vernon Robbins' article reviews the three suggestions offered¹⁰: 1) literally the deceased,¹¹ 2) the spiritually dead,¹² 3) and those who regularly bury the deceased: the gravediggers.¹³ What seems most probable is that the saying is an extreme expression of the absolute dedication of the disciples, without glancing back, to respond without any compromise.¹⁴

⁹ K. Kohler, *The Origins of the Synagogue and the Church* (New York: Macmillan Co, 1929), 212; France, *Matthew*, 161; M. Hengel, "On the Exegesis of Mt 8.21-22: 'Let the dead bury their dead'," *The Charismatic Leader and His Followers*. trans. J. Greig (New York: Cross Road, 1981), 14;

¹⁰ V. K. Robbins, "Foxes, Birds, & Furrows," in *Patterns of Persuasion in the Gospels*, ed. B. L. Mack (Sonoma, Calif. : Polebridge Press, 1989), 72-73;

¹¹ T. W. Manson, *Sayings of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1949), 73; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 218; H. G. Klemm, "Das Wort von der Selbstbestattung der Toten," in *NTS* 16 (1969), 73; B. R. McCane, "'Let the Dead Bury Their Own Dead' : Secondary Burial and Mt 8:21-22," in *HTR* 83 (1990), 41 .

¹² Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 359.

¹³ F. Perles, "Zwei Übersetzungsfehler im Text der Evangelien," *ZNW* 19 (1919), 96; idem, "Noch einmal Mt 8.22, Lc 9.60 so wie Joh 20.17," in *ZNW* 25 (1926), 286; C. G. Montefiore, *Synoptic Gospels* 2 (New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1968), 134; I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*. Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), 183-4; M. Black, "Let the Dead Bury their Dead," in *ExpTim* 61 (1950), 219-20; G. Schwarz, "ἄφες τοὺς νεκροὺς θάψαι τοὺς ἑαυτῶν νεκρούς," in *ZNW* 72 (1981), 272-76; L. Hermann, "Correction du k en a dans une phrase de Jesus," in *REA* 83 (1981), 283.

¹⁴ Leiva-Merikakis, *fire of Mercy*, 359.

In sum, those two passages reveal two situations concerning the cost of discipleship, one warning a man used to privilege and comforts that this life means the forfeiture of both. The other addresses the faltering disciple who looks back at family and justifies a request for separation for a time to be with his father and to be at home. Here Jesus' tough words recall the warning he gave to the scribe. The commitment will be complete and without pauses for comforts, or reconsiderations of obligations to family. The commitment is total. If those conditions cannot be met, one cannot follow Jesus as a disciple.

The Second Cluster (8:23-9:8): “Jesus, the Divine Being”

Introduction

In the second cluster of miracle stories Matthew continues his work of revealing Jesus' identity; however, the main concern of the second cluster is different from that of the first. The focus of the second trio is not so much on the mercy of Jesus, although that is naturally present,¹⁵ as it is on Jesus' identity as Son of God.¹⁶ That is, there is a progression in the revelation of Jesus' identity underway. For his second set of miracles, the evangelist has repositioned Markan material and redacted it. The first two miracles are from a pairing found in Mark's gospel, a nature miracle, “The Stilling of the Storm” (Matt 8:18-27// Mk 4:35-41) and the “Exorcism of the Gerasene Demoniacs” (Matt 8:28-34// Mk 5:1-20). For the third miracle, which climaxes the set, Matthew reaches backwards into the Markan order to retrieve “The Healing of the Paralytic” (Matt 9:1-

¹⁵ Jesus continues to show mercy as he saves his disciples from the storm, exorcizes two demons, and heals a paralytic.

¹⁶ This will be explained in detail below as the main theme of the second cluster.

8//Mk 2:1-12). There, with his special redaction, Matthew will place his own unique emphasis on the embedded controversy story that proves Jesus' authority on earth to forgive sins.¹⁷

In Chapter Two a review of scholarly opinions on the rationale for this order was provided. One example of such a rationale is that of Davies and Allison who suggest that the organizing feature for Matthew is the dramatic reaction of the witnesses to the three miracles.

The Responses of the witnesses to Jesus' miracles in Cluster Two

1st miracle story: To the Stilling of the Storm

"What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" (8:27).

2nd miracle story: To the Exorcism of the Demoniacs

"They begged him to leave their neighborhood" (8:34).

3rd miracle story: To the Healing of the Paralytic

"When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings" (9:8).

It is certainly true that in each of these stories the response of the witnesses is one of awe. In the case of the Exorcism of the Demoniacs the witnesses' awe is displayed in a negative way, with something like real fear of Jesus. The problem is that this similarity requires the bypassing of the differences in the character of the miracle stories grouped there. Certainly one could argue that, as Mark links them, the astonishing nature miracle of Jesus ordering the wind and sea to silence fits well with the subsequent exorcism story of the two Demoniacs. With all the astonishing elements of that story, with the demons fearful of Jesus' power to send them to judgment "before the time", and then their entry

¹⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 66; Morris, *Matthew*, 204-218; Patte, *Matthew*, 118.

into the pigs and drowning, this story brings out another kind of power that belongs to Jesus, which is his command over the demons. But how then does the story of the Healing of the Paralytic fit as the third piece? Surely he did not connect this story to the two previous on the basis of witness amazement. Rather scholars must allow that the very content of that third miracle takes Matthew's reader where he wants to lead them with respect to Jesus.

In fact, as this chapter will show, it is the issue of Jesus' authority to forgive sins, as the healing of the paralytic proves, that was important to Matthew as he expounded upon Jesus' identity beyond that of merciful Messiah to something more: Jesus' divinity. Thus in the first miracle, Nature is obedient to Jesus' command and this goes beyond the simple healing power that belongs to the merciful Messiah of Isa 53:4. This kind of power suggests that Nature's own elements recognize a special designation of Jesus and acknowledge him as empowered. Again, in the second miracle story the demons that are so fierce that no one can pass by those who are possessed by them now identify Jesus as Son of God. Moreover, their frightened question "Have you come here to torment us before the time?" reveals Jesus' power to cause them suffering. Their begging of Jesus to send them into the swine testifies to Jesus control over them. Only with Jesus' permission do they enter the swine and in that guise go over the steep bank and drown. With this story it is shown that it is not just Nature's forces that recognize Jesus' authority but also the supernatural forces that recognize the power and authority that he has to command them. The story also points to Jesus' power at the end time to send them to their punishment. If the theme of the ascending order of miracles displaying Jesus'

elevated scope of authority is followed through to the third miracle story, the controversy pericope now embedded and united to the healing shows that the Son of Man has the divine power to forgive sins on earth. Matthew can be sure that the listener has followed that important progression, so that when the miracle story concludes, the statement that the crowds “glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings” only shows how blind they are to what the stories testify to. Jesus is more than a ‘human being’; he is the divine being.

In this chapter we will see in detail how Matthew progressively reveals Jesus’ identity as the divine being.

Matthew’s Three Stage Progression in the Second Cluster

The main theme of the second cluster is ‘Jesus as the divine being,’ as discussed briefly above. What is important to note, however, is that the evangelist has arranged the three stories with an ascending declaration of Jesus’ divine power. The structure of the second cluster of Matthew 8-9 may be summarized as follows:

Matthew’s Three Stage Progression of Cluster Two

The Second Cluster (8:23-9:8): “Jesus, the Divine Being”

1. The first stage: The stilling of the storm implies Jesus’ deity.
2. The second stage: The demons call Jesus Son of God and obey him without resistance.
3. The third stage: Jesus himself proclaims his deity through the forgiveness of sins.

The First Stage: Stilling the Storm (Matthew 8:23-27// Mk 4:35-41)

²³Καὶ ἐμβάντι αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ. ²⁴καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμὸς μέγας ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, ὥστε τὸ πλοῖον καλύπτεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκάθευδεν. ²⁵καὶ προσελθόντες ἤγειραν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα. ²⁶καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι; τότε ἐγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τοῖς ἀνέμοις καὶ τῇ θαλάσῃ, καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη. ²⁷οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες· ποταπὸς ἐστὶν

οὗτος ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ ἡ θάλασσα αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν;

²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵ And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" ²⁶ And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. ²⁷ They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Introduction

There has been some controversy concerning whether or not the theme that reigns in this pericope is one of Discipleship¹⁸ or Christology.¹⁹ Those who argue for a focus on discipleship appeal to the narrative unit that is placed just before the trio of stories, Matt 8:18-22, which addresses those who volunteer for discipleship. In one case, the would-be disciple is warned about the cost of following Jesus, while in the other one of Jesus' own disciples needs to be counseled to leave parents and home behind if he wishes to follow Jesus. Thus, in the first miracle story when the disciples falter in fear, Jesus' challenge to them about their faith seems to be yet another teaching needed by his disciples. As Bornkamm states in the light of Matt 8:18-27, the Stilling of the Storm is "a kerygmatic

¹⁸ Among those who support discipleship are : Bornkamm, "Stilling of the Storm," 55; Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 204; Thompson, "Reflections on Mt 8:1-9:34," 375; Burger, "Jesu Taten nach Matthäus 8 und 9," 285; J. D. Kingsbury, "The Stilling of the Storm (Matthew 8:23-27)," in *WWSup* 1 (1992), 101-108; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 222; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 73; Gundry, *Matthew*, 156; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 221; Morris, *Matthew*, 206; Hare, *Matthew*, 96; France, *Matthew*, 162; Turner, *Matthew*, 243.

¹⁹ Among those who support Christology are P. F. Feiler, "The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew: A Response to Günther Bornkamm," in *JETS* 26 (1983), 399-406; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 150; J. P. Heil, *Jesus Walking on the Sea*, 84; Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 122; R. D. Aus, *The Stilling of the Storm: Studies in Early Palestinian Judaic Tradition* (Binghamton, NY: Binghamton University, 2000), 76; Strelan, Rick. "Greater than Caesar: Storm stories in Lucan and Mark," *ZNWKK* 91 (2000), 170; Gundry, *Matthew*, 156; Carson, "Matthew," 215; David W. Baker, "the wind and the waves," in *ATJ* 34 (2002), 25; Nolland, *Matthew*, 372; Keener, *Matthew*, 280; P. J. Achtemeier, "Person and deed: Jesus and the Storm Tossed Sea," in *Interpretation* 16 (1962), 169-76; D. J. Harrington, *Mark* (New York; W. H. Sadlier, 1983), 143.

paradigm about the danger and glory of discipleship.”²⁰ Following Bornkamm,²¹ many scholars interpret this miracle story as the extension of the theme in Mt 8:18-22. Held divides all nine miracle stories in 8-9 into three divisions influenced by Mt 8:18-9:17 and identifies their focus as ‘discipleship.’²²

Other scholars influenced by arguments in favor of discipleship as the main theme interpret the Stilling of the Storm as a kind of lesson to the listener on faithful discipleship and confidence in the church. The boat is discussed as a symbol of the church in danger of “the storm,” that is, the political challenges to its existence. The story teaches that as long as Jesus is in the boat, understood as the Church, no force can destroy it. Jesus’ challenge to the disciples about their lack of faith forms the lesson to be learned from the story.

Some scholars, Luz among them, hold that besides an ecclesiological message the story holds a soteriological teaching and witness as well.²³ Davies and Allison also recognize two dimensions to the story. They critique both Bornkamm and Heil:

Bornkamm has almost entirely overlooked the Christological elements in 8:23-7... at the same time, Heil has probably gone too far in the other direction. While he [Heil] concedes that ‘the storm-stilling story concerns the disciples’ and that ‘the readers of Matthew can identify with this unique experience of the disciples,’ he makes too little of these facts.²⁴

²⁰ Bornkamm, “The Stilling of the Storm,” 57. For detailed criticism of Bornkamm-Held’s interpretation of this miracle story as discipleship, see J. P. Heil’s book, *Jesus Walking on the Sea: Meaning and Gospel Function of Matt 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52 and John 6:15b-21* (Rome; Biblical Institute Press, 1981), 94-97.

²¹ Bornkamm, “The Stilling of the Storm,” 54.

²² Held, “Matthew as Interpreter,” 245-46, 248-49.

²³ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 20-21.

²⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 8-18, 69.

Unfortunately, this approach is unable to explain how the story functions in the set of three that Matthew has assembled and positioned here. Moreover, as we have noted before, to take each of the miracles one by one and to give to each a theme does not take into due consideration the organization of the whole, including the functioning of the intervening narratives. Now, with relation to this second set of three miracles, the way in which the miracles relate to each other as a unit must have an explanation that not only takes all parts into consideration but is also able to explain how this cluster fits the organization of miracles in chapters 8-9 that Matthew has created. In fact, discipleship may be argued as a theme in the Stilling of the Storm, but it is not the theme in the story of the Exorcism of the Demoniacs. In fact, Matthew has excised the small attached story in Mark in which the former demoniac asks if he might go with Jesus and is told to stay and make known what the Lord did for him (Mk 5:18-20). Discipleship is also not the main theme of the third miracle, the Healing of the Paralytic. So we see that the rest of the cluster does not support a theme of discipleship as Held himself admits.²⁵ Moreover, the teachings on discipleship are plainly put forward by Matthew in chapter 5, chapter 10, and again in chapter 18.²⁶ In any case, the argument for discipleship as the governing theme of the section is not sustained by the other two miracle stories in the cluster.

The theme that does prevail in each of the accounts is the authority of Jesus, and so contributes to Matthew's Christology. As we have noted before, Jesus' power to command Nature alerts the listener to his divine identity, especially as seen in the disciples cry "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and waves obey him! (8:27)." So

²⁵ Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 248.

²⁶ Anderson, *Matthew's Narrative Web*, 152.

Jesus as the merciful messiah of Isa 53:4 is seen to be more than that as the disciples recognize in his breath-taking power his authority to command Nature and to be obeyed instantly.²⁷ The listeners are led to the only conclusion possible, that Jesus is divinely empowered and recognized as such even by the forces of Nature.

Matthew's Redaction

Transition

Matt 8:23 Καὶ ἐμβάντι αὐτῷ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ (And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him).

Mk 4:36a καὶ ἀφέντες τὸν ὄχλον παραλαμβάνουσιν αὐτὸν ὡς ἦν ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ (And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was).

While Matthew did not redact the Markan story in extreme ways, the changes that he did introduce are worthy of our attention here. First, Matthew changes the Markan context. In Mark Jesus has already entered a boat to teach the parables and from there is taken by the disciples in the boat into the sea to cross over to the Gerasenes. Matthew's location of the story is more intense. One set of three miracles has already followed the Sermon on the Mount. After this first cluster, the intervening narrative pericope (Mat 8:19-22) has been inserted. As we have seen there is a sense in which Jesus' correction of the disciple (Matt 8:22) acts as a kind of punctuation mark. "Leave the dead to bury the dead" is his statement.

After this, Jesus himself boards a boat for the other side and the disciples follow him. Here we notice Matthew's Christology where Jesus is leader, teacher, and Lord. He

²⁷ We cannot find any expression of 'surprise' in the first cluster. One characteristic of the second cluster is 'surprise': "The men were amazed (8:27)," "the swineherds ran off (8:33)," "they were filled with awe (9:8)." While the exorcism story does not directly state surprise, the swineherds' behavior in asking Jesus to leave implies '(negative) surprise.'

is the one who takes charge. As we have mentioned earlier, taken on its own and apart from the question of this story's placement in Matthew's second group of three, one can certainly affirm that Matthew's constant portrayal of the disciples as obedient is being brought out here.

Storm and Jesus' sleep

Mk 4:37 καὶ γίνεται λαῖλαψ μεγάλη ἀνέμου καὶ τὰ κύματα ἐπέβαλλεν εἰς τὸ πλοῖον, ὥστε ἤδη γεμίζεσθαι τὸ πλοῖον. (A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped.)

Matt 8:24 καὶ ἰδοὺ σεισμὸς μέγας ἐγένετο ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ, ὥστε τὸ πλοῖον καλύπτεσθαι ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκάθευδεν. (A windstorm ²⁸ [σεισμὸς] arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep.)

Matthew's insertion of 'Behold (ἰδοὺ),' dramatically signals that "something special is about to happen."²⁹ Likewise, Matthew intensifies the problem of the storm by changing the 'great wind storm' (λαῖλαψ μεγάλη ἀνέμου) to a 'great quake' (σεισμὸς μέγας).³⁰ Does Matthew use this language to suggest a more serious situation to highlight Jesus' immense power? Does this insertion prepare the listeners for the Matthew's future connection of signs on the earth which point to the End times and times of Divine visitation?³¹

²⁸ Here we are using the NRSV as we noted at the beginning of the dissertation.

²⁹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 221.

³⁰ One wonders if Matthew is relying on the tradition that earthquakes will mark the coming of the End times (Matt 24:7//Mk 13:8) and so inserts this sign elsewhere. Besides this miracles story, he inserts it into the story of Jesus' death on the cross, when there is an earthquake and tombs are split and many of the saints are seen raised (Matt 27:54). Matthew's tradition also has an earthquake at the time of Jesus' resurrection. With the earthquake the angel descends from heaven and rolls back the stone (Matt 28:2). See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 69 and also Blomberg, *Matthew*, 149.

³¹ According to Blomberg this word is 'a term used for apocalyptic upheavals (cf. 24:7; 27:54; 28:2), often with preternatural overtones.' See Blomberg, *Matthew*, 149.

Commenting on this, Hagner offers the view that Jesus' sleep can be interpreted as "evidence of a trust [Jesus'] in God's protection (cf. Job 11:18-19; Pss 3:5-6, 4:8; Prov 3:24-26)."³² For Davies and Allison Jesus' sleep is rather a sign of his divinity, for "sleeping is a symbol of supreme and unchallenged ability: only the one completely in charge can truly sleep in peace."³³ Along these lines, Bernard F. Batto would argue that it was common to interpret the sleep of a deity as a sign of complete power. He states, "The ability of the divine king to sleep undisturbed was a symbol of his unchallenged authority as the supreme deity...to interrupt or to disturb the sleep of the supreme deity was tantamount to rebellion against his dominion."³⁴

The disciples' response

Mk 4:38b καὶ ἐγείρουσιν αὐτὸν καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ· διδάσκαλε, οὐ μέλει σοι ὅτι ἀπολλύμεθα; (And they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?").

Matt 8:25 καὶ προσελθόντες ἤγειραν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, σῶσον, ἀπολλύμεθα. (And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!").

Matthew's version of the response of the disciples is quite different from his source. First, the disciples in Matthew do not wake up Jesus and accuse him of lacking concern that they are all going to perish as Mark's disciples do. Mark's disciples have no idea that Jesus could do anything about the storm; their complaint is that in this terrible moment Jesus is sleeping. Jesus is not joining them and exerting leadership as their

³² Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 221.

³³ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 72.

³⁴ Bernard F. Batto, "The Sleeping God: An Ancient Near Eastern Motif of Divine Sovereignty," in *Biblica* 68 (1987), 159. According to Bernard F. Batto, the theme of the sleeping or resting deity is frequently found in Ancient Near Eastern literature.

Master as they all die. This is certainly not the case in Matthew. First, Matthew makes sure that Jesus is addressed as ‘Lord (κύριε)’ rather than the less elevated ‘teacher (διδάσκαλε)’ of Mark 4:38. More importantly, Matthew’s disciples plainly believe that Jesus can save them from this situation; they say “Lord, save [us]! We perish!” Here Matthew tips his hand. Why would the disciples ask Jesus to save them if they did not believe that he could do so? This is where Matthew trips himself up in his efforts to polish the miracle story so that the disciples will not shame themselves as he believes they do in Mark’s version. Having the disciples ask Jesus to save them creates certain awkwardness in picking up the rest of the Markan account. For how can they really express the same astonishment over Jesus’ power as the Markan disciples do if they already believed that Jesus had the power to save them?³⁵ Gundry’s ingenious solution is to pose that the Matthean disciples ask Jesus for a miracle to save them, but they do not know what that miracle might be.³⁶

Jesus’ response

Mk 4:39-40 ³⁹καὶ διεγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τῷ ἀνέμῳ καὶ εἶπεν τῇ θαλάσσῃ· σιῶπα, πεφίμωσο. καὶ ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνῃ μεγάλη. ⁴⁰καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τί δειλοί ἐστε; οὐπω ἔχετε πίστιν; (And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still.” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”)

Matt 8:26 καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι; τότε ἐγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τοῖς

³⁵ Kingsbury understands this as having “the form of a prayer for deliverance.” But this is a direct appeal of the disciples and not a prayer. See his article, “The Stilling of the Storm,” 106.

³⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 155-56; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 73. Notice that the same cry to save is found on the lips of Peter in Matthew 14:22-33 where in v. 30 we read ‘κύριε, σῶσόν με.’ The difference here, of course, is that in the Walking on the Water Peter has already seen Jesus’ miraculous passage across the water and his own few steps. Peter’s cry to be saved from drowning has to do with his loss of faith at the sight of the wind.

ἀνέμοις καὶ τῇ θαλάσῃ, καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη. (And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm).

As can be seen, Matthew has reversed Mark’s order in which Jesus first performs the miracle of the stilling of the storm and then rebukes the disciples. In his order of the two elements the stilling of the storm follows the rebuke to the disciples.

Matthew’s Change of the Markan Order

Mk 4:37 The boat seems in danger of sinking due to the storm
 38 The disciples wake Jesus and rebuke his seeming lack of concern
 39 Jesus stills the storm
 40 Jesus rebukes the disciples for their lack of faith
 41 The disciples respond with awe at Jesus’ command over Nature and ask what this means about his identity.

Mt 8:24 The boat seems in danger of sinking due to the upheaval of the sea
 25 The disciples wake Jesus and beg for him to save them
 26a Jesus rebukes the disciples for their little faith
 26b Jesus stills the storm
 27 The disciples respond with awe at Jesus’ command over Nature and ask what this means about his identity.

What does Matthew intend by reversing the order of Jesus’ rebuke to the disciples? Many scholars conclude that the focus for Matthew is on the theme of discipleship.³⁷ For example, Held explains, “by transposing the scene Matthew has created a conversation between the disciples and Jesus and placed this in the center, so that the stilling of the storm looks like an appendage.”³⁸ We must comment here that the awe-struck response of the disciples to the miracle hardly allows the stilling of the storm to appear as an

³⁷ Among them are Held, “Matthew as Interpreter,” 204; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 222; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 73; Gundry, *Matthew*, 156; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 221; Morris, *Matthew*, 206; Hare, *Matthew*, 96; France, *Matthew*, 162; Turner, *Matthew*, 243.

³⁸ Held, “Matthew as Interpreter,” 204.

appendage.

Davies and Allison also argue that the reversal in the order of the miracle and the rebuke to the disciples in Matthew is rather artificial and yet is done to support

Matthew's discipleship theme:

Jesus now acts to save. After speaking to the disciples he commands the winds and sea, which dutifully obey him. This reverses the narrative sequence of Mark, where Jesus first rebukes the sea. The Matthean order is less natural. What is its explanation? In the First Gospel the emphasis is no longer, as in Mark, on the stilling of the storm but rather on the faith of the disciples in a difficult situation.³⁹

That is, they see the correction of the disciples before any help is given as far too stylized and typically pedantic to reflect a more natural response on the part of Jesus, namely, to stop the storm first and then correct them for their fear. Certainly, by creating this reversal, there is no doubt that the correction of the disciples becomes more of an immediate "counsel" on discipleship, but the rebuke cannot be too large because, after all, the Matthean disciples did imagine that Jesus could save them somehow. In fact, Jesus' rebuke that they have "little faith" is even quite demanding, for they do in fact wake him up to ask him to save them rather than to rebuke him for not joining them as a leader as they all drown together.

Matthew's redaction, in my view, results in the performance of the miracle being the focal point of the narrative, not interrupted by rebuke but allowed to take the center stage and main attention of the listener together with the final astonished question of the awe-struck disciples.

³⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 73.

Thus the real point of the miracle is brought out clearly: “what sort of man is this?”⁴⁰

In my view, this is the result of Matthew’s careful planning so that the identity of Jesus receives an augmentation almost immediately after he has been shown to fulfill the Messianic prophecy of Isa 53:4 in his previous miracles and exorcisms (Matt 8:17). This miracle forces the listener to move beyond the usual Messianic associations to consider more fully the evidence of Jesus’ identity as one whom the cosmic forces obey.

Jesus’ power to still the storm

Mk 4:39-40 καὶ διεγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τῷ ἀνέμῳ καὶ εἶπεν τῇ θαλάσσῃ· σιῶπα, πεφίμωσο. καὶ ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη. ⁴⁰καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· τί δειλοί ἐστε; οὐπω ἔχετε πίστιν; (And he woke up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still.” Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”).

Matt 8:26 καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· τί δειλοί ἐστε, ὀλιγόπιστοι; τότε ἐγερθεὶς ἐπετίμησεν τοῖς ἀνέμοις καὶ τῇ θαλάσσῃ, καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη. (And he said to them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm).

It is worth noting the small ways in which Matthew has redacted the account of Jesus command to the elements. Matthew has avoided separating the elements as Mark’s tradition does, but they are treated together as a combination that arose with the quake in the sea. He also refrains from quoting Jesus’ orders, perhaps because πεφίμωσο is rather vulgar or prosaic for the majestic moment of Jesus’ command over the elements. It could be too that the direct address of the elements would invite suggestions of magical formulae. The sudden great calm (γαλήνη μεγάλη) underlines the power of Jesus and

⁴⁰ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 21. Blomberg also sees this question as the climax of the story. See his article, “The Miracle Stories,” 341.

Nature's recognition of his authority over the cosmos.

Many scholars, such as P. F. Feiler, make a point of arguing that the focus of this miracle is on Jesus' role as Deliverer contra Bornkamm, who holds that this miracle stresses discipleship.⁴¹ For Bornkamm, the placement of this miracle which immediately follows the two pronouncement stories on discipleship in Matt 8:18-22 proves that Matthew intends the Stilling of the Storm to be a further lesson on the faith a disciple should have. For Feiler, those discipleship pericopae act as a hinge to a new topic concerning how a disciple must understand Christ's true identity and role. The would-be disciple of Matt 8:18-20 and the disciple who wishes to leave in order to care for his parents in Matthew 8:21-22 represent for Matthew two groups among those "who lack insight into the true purpose of Christ's mission" (8:10-12; 8:34; 9:10-13; 9:14; 9:36).⁴² To Feiler, then, the Stilling of the Storm plays the role of defining Jesus' real identity to such groups. Seen symbolically, this miracle attests to the listener that Jesus reveals himself as "the Deliverer who saves those overwhelmed by the chaos and afflictions of life" just as "Yahweh delivered those tossed by the currents of the deep" in the story of

⁴¹ P. F. Feiler, "The Stilling of the Storm in Matthew: A Response to Gunther Bornkamm," in *JETS* 26 (1983), 399-406; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 150; J. P. Heil, *Jesus Walking on the Sea*, 84; Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 122; Rogers D. Aus, *The Stilling of the Storm: Studies in Early Palestinian Judaic Tradition* (Binghamton, NY: Binghamton University, 2000), 76; A Y Collins, "Rules, Divine Men, and Walking on the Water (Mark 6:45-52)," in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994), 214; J. Gnllka, *Das Evangelium noch Markus* vol.1, p.198 footnote 35; Strelan, "Storm stories in Lucan and Mark," 170; Gundry, *Matthew*, 156; Carson, "Matthew," 215; Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 219; David W. Baker, "the wind and the waves," in *ATJ* 34 (2002), 25; Nolland, *Matthew*, 372; Keener, *Matthew*, 280; P. J. Achtemeier, "Person and deed: Jesus and the Storm Tossed Sea," in *Interpretation* 16 (1962), 169-76; Harrington, *Gospel According Mark* (New York-; W. H. Sadlier, 1983), 143; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 20; Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 372; Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 319.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 401.

Jonah (Jonah 1:3-16).⁴³ However, people still do not fully comprehend Jesus' identity even though the wind and the seas are obedient to him.

Craig L. Blomberg develops Feiler's idea more clearly. He observes that in Jesus' stilling of the storm "Jesus has demonstrated the identical sovereignty over wind and waves attributed to Yahweh in the OT (Jonah 1-2; Pss. 104:7; 107:23-32)."⁴⁴ As Yahweh rebukes the primitive waters into obedience in Gen 1:6-10, Jesus has the same ability over the waters. Here Matthew illustrates that Jesus has the same divine power as Yahweh. Thus, to Blomberg, the main theme of this story is "squarely Christological." He judges that because Jesus has this kind of power he is no less than God and thus deserves the worship of his disciples, but the disciples do not understand fully this identity of Jesus.⁴⁵ Matthew is able to provide yet another step in guiding the listener to see the divinity of Jesus as God's Son.

D. Patte and Carson offer similar interpretations. According to Patte, when Jesus stills the storm by rebuking the winds and the sea (8:26), "for the readers (with their knowledge of Pss. 29:3-4; 65:7; 89:9; 93:4; 107:29; 124:1-5), this demonstrates that Jesus' power is divine power. As Yahweh has, so Jesus has power over natural elements such as the winds and the sea."⁴⁶ Carson notes regarding the listeners, "Those who really

⁴³ Ibid., 406.

⁴⁴ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 150.

⁴⁵ Blomberg observes that in general Jesus' nature miracles, especially rescue miracles, bring about people's worship. See his book, *Matthew*, 150; idem, "The Miracles as Parables," *Gospel Perspectives*, vol. 6, ed. C. Blomberg and D. Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT, 1986), 340-42.

⁴⁶ Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress press, 1987), 122.

knew the OT would remember that there God is presented as the one who controls and stills the seas.”⁴⁷ For both scholars, Matthew’s main concern is Jesus’ divine authority in storm-stilling.⁴⁸

J. P. Heil discusses the miracle story as “a sea-rescue epiphany,” and one where the epiphany is identified later in Matthew’s treatment of the Walking on the Water (Matt 14:22-33).⁴⁹ If the storm-stilling epiphany raises the question of Jesus’ identity (8:27), the sea-walking epiphany answers via the disciples’ worshipping confession: “Truly you are the Son of God (14:33).”

Interestingly, Heil also engages the question of whether the Stilling of the Storm is focused on discipleship. His point is that without Jesus’ performance of storm-stilling the story does not make sense at all. In addition, the story ends with the surprise of the disciples not with the recipients’ enhanced faith. This shows that the story is not directly related with the disciples’ faith. Therefore, the main theme of this story is understood better as Jesus’ previously unknown power and divinity than the disciples’ faith:

It is not to be denied that the storm-stilling story concerns the disciples. Nor is it to be denied that the readers of Matthew can identify with this unique experience of the disciples. But to call it a story of discipleship, as Bornkamm and Held do, is very misleading. The story is more about Jesus than it is about the disciples. It makes a statement about discipleship only in and through its Christological statement, namely, that the divine power of Jesus experienced by the disciples during his life was greater than their faith could grasp.⁵⁰

In this storm-stilling epiphany, Heil observes, we see Jesus’ divine power. The

⁴⁷ Carson, “Matthew,” 215.

⁴⁸ Patte, *Matthew*, 120; Carson, “Matthew,” 216.

⁴⁹ Heil, *Jesus Walking on the Sea*, 84.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 97.

disciples are beginning to experience a new series of manifestations of Jesus' divine power unknown in the first cluster of miracle stories. In fact, Heil uses form criticism to underline his point. Sea-rescue miracle stories belong to the epiphany genre, "a disposition of literary motifs narrating a sudden and unexpected manifestation of a divine or heavenly being experienced by certain selected persons, in which the divine being reveals a divine attribute, action or message."⁵¹

Heil is certainly correct that Jesus displays a divine authority over Nature that surpasses the healings and exorcisms of the first cluster of miracle stories. Indeed, we see that the answer to the awe-struck question of the disciples in Matt 8:27 will be answered in Matthew's version of the Walking on the Sea in Matt 14:33.⁵²

In this first sea miracle, as Brower states the case, "Jesus has the same authority and power as Yahweh exercises; he has divine identity because he acts as God acts."⁵³ We could say that really it is in this miracle story where Jesus' special relation to God is incontestable. If the first cluster focuses on the merciful healing Messiah, this story stresses Jesus' deity. He is one who can make nature obey him.

Mk 4:39b καὶ ἐκόπασεν ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη (Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm.)

Matt 8: 26d καὶ ἐγένετο γαλήνη μεγάλη (and there was a dead calm).

As soon as Jesus rebuked the wind and the sea they both obeyed Jesus instantly.

⁵¹ Ibid., 8.

⁵² In addition, the author has already given some hints that Jesus is the Son of God in the previous passages, such as: 1:18-25; 2:15; 3:17; 4:1-11, but nobody knows what Jesus can do except healing all diseases.

⁵³ Brower, "Who then Is This?" 296.

Just as all diseases were healed immediately as soon as Jesus wanted regardless of distance or degree, so also nature's response is immediate. This immediacy strengthens Jesus' divine authority over Nature. This expression 'a dead calm (γαλήνη μεγάλη)' or literally "a great calm" should be interpreted in relation to Matthew's replacement of Mark's *λαίλαψ μεγάλη ανέμου* (v. 37) with the more pointed and cosmically dramatic *σεισμός μέγας* (literally the "great quake [in the sea]"). The great agent of the storm, the quake, we see as resolved by Jesus' miracle and the great calm. As a result, Matthew more definitely identifies the scope of Jesus' cosmic power in controlling and silencing the forces that are otherwise totally under the control of God.

The response of Jesus' disciples

Mark 4:41 *καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἀλλήλους· τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ὑπακούει αὐτῷ;* (and they feared with a great fear, and said to each other, "Who, therefore, is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?")

Matt 8:27 *οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες· ποταπός ἐστιν οὗτος ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἄνεμοι καὶ ἡ θάλασσα αὐτῷ ὑπακούουσιν;* (But the people were amazed saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?").

Matthew has removed Mark's statement, "they feared with a great fear," likely because for his listeners it might be taken as faltering in faith. Rather he turns to a kind of wonderful amazement instead.

It is interesting to note that Matthew identifies those in the boat as "the people" (*οἱ ἄνθρωποι*) in v. 27⁵⁴ although he has clearly identified those in the boat as disciples, ("And when he got into the boat his disciples followed him" v. 23). Nowhere in Mark's account is there a direct identification of those on board as disciples. One relies, rather,

⁵⁴ This seems also to be related to 'to human beings' as found in Matt 9:8, the third miracle of this second cluster, which we shall discuss later.

on their addressing Jesus as “Teacher” (v. 38) and most clearly due to the Markan placement of the story immediately following a Markan summary statement that Jesus explained his parable to his disciples in private (v. 34).

Mk 4:41 καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν φόβον μέγαν καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἀλλήλους (and they were filled with great awe and said to one another).

Mt 8:27 οἱ δὲ ἄνθρωποι ἐθαύμασαν λέγοντες (they were amazed, saying).

There have been many different interpretations about the ‘the people/the men,’⁵⁵ but perhaps the theory of Robert Gundry is the most outstanding. He notes that οἱ ἄνθρωποι is used in contrast to God throughout the Gospel of Matthew (6:1-18; 7:9-11; 9:8; 10:32-33; 16:23; 19:26; 21:25-26). Thus he concludes that ‘the people/ the men (οἱ ἄνθρωποι)’ are used as “a foil to the divine figure of Jesus, whose majesty and authority he [the author] cannot emphasize too much.”⁵⁶ So, for Gundry, Matthew impresses upon the listener the vulnerable human condition in contrast to the divinity of Jesus.⁵⁷

Davies and Allison concur, observing also that the plural “people/men” represents humankind, in contrast to the divinity of Jesus. Matthew wants to create a contrast between ‘men’ and ‘one who is more than a man.’ They write:

Gundry urges that Matthew has described the disciples as ‘men’ in order to suggest that Jesus the Lord might be more than just a man. This is more plausible than the other proposals heretofore made – that ‘men’ underlines the disciples’ imperfect faith, or that the word alludes to Jon 1.16 (‘the

⁵⁵ For reference, see Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 75.

⁵⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 156. Leon Morris also agrees to Gundry’s interpretation. See his book, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 207.

⁵⁷ Those who interpret the main theme of this story as discipleship have the tendency to interpret this change as an expression to avoid having disciples who are so ignorant as to need to ask the question: what sort of man is he? Or this change is sometimes understood as showing that the twelve is not yet constituted. See Schweizer, *Matthew*, 221; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 222; Nolland, *Matthew*, 372; Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 319; France, *Matthew*, 162.

men feared the Lord'), or that the crew of the boat is in view, or that a crowd on shore is intended, or that the subject is the occupants of other boats, or that we are to think of men, after the fact, marveling upon hearing of the miracle.⁵⁸

For Patte, 'the men' is used by Matthew in the broader sense. It does not mean simply the disciples on the boat but humanity in contrast to the exalted status of Jesus. Moreover, he posits that Matthew means to emphasize that Jesus' divine nature is to be recognized by all human beings even those outside the boat.⁵⁹

As the miracle concludes, the disciples know that Jesus is far more than the fulfillment of the Isaiah prophecy. This miracle takes them to another place in their journey toward understanding the full identity of Jesus and his full significance. That identity is revealed progressively in the two stories that follow according to Matthew's arrangement.

Conclusion of the First Story

The miracle story of the storm stilling demonstrates the theme of Jesus' divinity rather than that of discipleship. This story is focused on the person of Jesus to whom the wind and waves obey and this miracle brings to the disciples' mouths a question that begins to receive an answer in this story, the first stage among three stages of revelation: "What sort of man is this?"

It will be noted that in the first cluster of miracle stories, the disciples are never awe-struck and do not ask who Jesus might be. It is here in this first miracle of the second cluster that the disciples are stunned with Jesus' cosmic authority, authority that,

⁵⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 75.

⁵⁹ Patte, *Matthew*, 122.

according to the OT, belongs to God.⁶⁰ Clearly Jesus is more than the messianic agent who heals all kinds of diseases as shown in the first cluster. The identity of Jesus will be revealed progressively through the mouths of the two demons and then through the proclamation of Jesus himself in the following two stories.

The Second Stage: The Gadarene Demoniacs (Matthew 8:28-34//Mark 5:1-20)

²⁸Καὶ ἐλθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πέραν εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γαδαρηνῶν ὑπήντησαν αὐτῷ δύο δαιμονιζόμενοι ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἐξερχόμενοι, χαλεποὶ λίαν, ὥστε μὴ ἰσχύειν τινὰ παρελθεῖν διὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐκείνης. ²⁹ καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔκραξαν λέγοντες· τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ; ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς; ³⁰ ἦν δὲ μακρὰν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀγέλη χοίρων πολλῶν βοσκομένη. ³¹ οἱ δὲ δαίμονες παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· εἰ ἐκβάλλεις ἡμᾶς, ἀπόστειλον ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἀγέλην τῶν χοίρων. ³² καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὑπάγετε. οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες ἀπῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους· καὶ ἰδοὺ ὥρμησεν πᾶσα ἡ ἀγέλη κατὰ τοῦ κρημοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἀπέθανον ἐν τοῖς ὕδασιν. ³³ οἱ δὲ βόσκοντες ἔφυγον, καὶ ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν πάντα καὶ τὰ τῶν δαιμονιζομένων. ³⁴ καὶ ἰδοὺ πᾶσα ἡ πόλις ἐξῆλθεν εἰς ὑπάντησιν τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν παρεκάλεσαν ὅπως μεταβῇ ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων αὐτῶν.

²⁸*When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. ²⁹Suddenly they shouted, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" ³⁰Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. ³¹The demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." ³²And he said to them, "Go!" So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water. ³³The swineherds ran off, and ongoing into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood.*

Introduction

The second miracle story of the second cluster is about the exorcism of two demon-possessed men and follows Mark's order so that it is positioned immediately after the Stilling of the Storm. Scholars have sought after Matthew's intended meaning for this

⁶⁰ Richard A. Edwards, *Matthew's Narrative Portraits of Disciples* (Harrisburg, PN: Trinity Press International, 1997), 31.

miracle in light of the fact that he has excised Markan material extensively. Luz writes:

It is difficult to explain the story from the perspective of the evangelist. He has omitted so many details from his Markan source that one can hardly ask why in each individual case. A clear redactional tendency is not obvious...The most curious feature is the omission of Mark 5:18-20. Thus the primary question for the interpretation is what Matthew was trying to do with his abridgment, or, perhaps, what it was about the Markan narrative that bothered him.⁶¹

Luz's question does not encompass the larger issue for this study concerning how Matthew's redaction of this account is explained if one examines his placement of it in his own trio of miracle stories. As we shall show below, this sort of analysis will not only explain the extensive omission of Mark's material, but in particular his puzzling excision of the tradition in Mark 5:18-20 where the exorcized man pleads with Jesus to let him come with him.

As we have already noted, this second cluster of miracle stories in Matthew is composed of The Stilling of the Storm (Matt 8:23-27// Mk 4:35-41), the Exorcism of the Gadarene Demoniacs (Matt 8:28-34// Mk 5:1-20), and the Healing of the Paralytic (Matt 9:2-8// Mk 2:1-12). The suggestion that discipleship controls the theme of these three miracles has been supported by a number of scholars usually because they understand Matthew 8:18-22, the two chreiai about discipleship, as the introduction which the evangelist provided to signal that theme for the miracle stories he positioned immediately following.⁶² Even so, one of these prominent scholars, Held, confesses real difficulty when trying to find the discipleship theme throughout the cluster.

⁶¹ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 23.

⁶² See the thematic approaches in Chapter Two. However, Nolland says that "the present episode does not make a major contribution to the discipleship framework established for 8:18-9:13 since the disciples play only a passive witnessing role." Instead, he emphasizes the role of exorcism for the disciples' mission and the rejection of Jesus for the disciples' future role. See his book, *Matthew*, 373.

There remains as a third section the group in Matt. 8:18-9:17. *Here it is the most difficult to discover an ordering principles.* Nevertheless observations do accrue which justify us in taking them together as a group. With 8:18 it is clear that a new section is introduced which is characterized by separation from the multitude.⁶³ (*italics mine*)

With the exception of the Stilling of the Storm, where Jesus calls on the disciples to have faith (Matt 8: 26) the other two miracle stories in the second cluster do not address discipleship. Moreover, as we have observed, Matthew even removes the Markan tradition (Mk 5:18-20), which he could have built upon if he had been interested in addressing discipleship. Although Held will insist that this section shows Jesus as “the Lord of his congregation who works out the congregational problem of discipleship” in this block,⁶⁴ he is unable to show how that functions in the two stories that follow the Stilling of the Storm. Indeed, his theory that Matthew 8:18-9:17 serves a discipleship theme has been challenged frequently.⁶⁵

Christopher Burger identifies the controlling theme as “the risk of succession” as discussed fully in Chapter Two.⁶⁶ The Exorcism of the Gadarene Demoniacs is meant to focus on Jesus’ rejection by the inhabitants of the Gadarene region (8:34), which portends the rejection the disciples themselves will suffer in the future and in this way the story addresses discipleship.⁶⁷ We must observe that the focus of the miracle story is Jesus’

⁶³ Held, “The Form of the Miracle Story,” 248.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 249.

⁶⁵ See Thematic Approaches in Chapter Two.

⁶⁶ Burger, “Jesu Taten nach Matthäus 8 und 9,” 285.

⁶⁷ Many scholars observe the theme of discipleship in this story. Among them are Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 24; C. S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 287; David Turner, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 247; M. Green, *The Message of Matthew* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2001), 121; Morris, *Matthew*, 212.

miracle itself as an expression of his authoritative power over demons. Beyond the mention of the rejection of the people, Matthew does not give extra attention to this feature.

What is important to notice, as we shall show below, is that the result of Matthew's redaction is that the focus of the story is on Jesus' power to cast out demons. He has not even reported that the demoniacs, once exorcized of the demons, were at peace, something that Held himself observes.⁶⁸ We will see below how Matthew emphasizes his main concern through his redaction of the Markan text.

The Matthean Redaction

Jesus' encounter of the demons

Mk 5:1-2 ¹Καὶ ἦλθον εἰς τὸ πέραν τῆς θαλάσσης εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γερασηνῶν. ²καὶ ἐξελθόντος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου εὐθὺς ὑπήντησεν αὐτῷ ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ (¹They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes,² and when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him...)

Mt 8:28a Καὶ ἐλθόντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πέραν εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Γαδαρηνῶν ὑπήντησαν αὐτῷ δύο δαιμονιζόμενοι ἐκ τῶν μνημείων ἐξερχόμενοι (When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him.)

This story in both Mark and Matthew describes Jesus' victory over the demons,⁶⁹ just as the first story in this cluster illustrates Jesus' power over the cosmos. Now Jesus is in Gentile territory, the region of the Gadarenes, which is proven by the presence of the pigs, an animal that the Jewish people would not raise since they were considered unclean animals. When Jesus arrives to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, after

⁶⁸ Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 172; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 23; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 77.

⁶⁹ Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 378.

embarking on the journey in Mt 8:18, he confronts two demon-possessed men.

The reason that Matthew has presented two demoniacs instead of just one may be due to his practice of “compensation,” as Robert Gundry illustrates. Since Matthew has excised the Markan’ account of Jesus’ exorcism of the demon-possessed man in the Synagogue (Mk 1:21-28), he compensates by doubling the demoniacs here.⁷⁰

Notice also that Matthew refines the less polished expression “with an unclean spirit” (ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ) to the more concise and his favored “demon-possessed” (δαιμονιζόμενοι).

The fierce demoniacs

Mk 5:3-5 ³ ὃς τὴν κατοίκησιν εἶχεν ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν, καὶ οὐδὲ ἀλύσει οὐκέτι οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο αὐτὸν δῆσαι ⁴ τὸ αὐτὸν διὰ πολλάκις πέδαις καὶ ἀλύσεσιν δεδέσθαι καὶ διεσπᾶσθαι ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ τὰς ἀλύσεις καὶ τὰς πέδας συντετριῖσθαι, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἴσχυεν αὐτὸν δαμάσαι· ⁵ καὶ διὰ παντὸς νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν ἦν κράζων καὶ κατακόπτων ἑαυτὸν λίθοις. (...who lived in the tombs, and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; ⁴for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones.)

Mt 8:28b χαλεποὶ λίαν, ὥστε μὴ ἰσχύειν τινὰ παρελθεῖν διὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ ἐκείνης. (...they were so fierce that no one could pass that way.)

Because Matthew places more of a focus on the powerful intervention of Jesus than on the petitioners, we see that he trims the lengthy Markan introduction and removes such details as: (1) the demoniac’s dwelling in the tombs, (2) the futile efforts of the

⁷⁰ Notice that Matthew also doubles the number of blind men to whom Jesus gives sight in Matt 20:29. There he is using Mark 10:46-52, but since he has excised the story of the Blind Man of Bethsaida in Mk 8:21-28, he includes in his own account this other attestation of Jesus giving sight to the blind. See Robert Gundry, *Matthew*, 157-158 and his section, “Compensation” in his topical index, 649. Morris also comments that Matthew “rolled two exorcism stories [Mk 1:23-28 and 5:1-20] into one [Mt 8:28-34].” Morris, *Matthew*, 209. See also M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew* (London: SPCK, 1974), 44-45; Keener, *Matthew*, 282.

people to control him with chains and leg manacles, (3) the report of the demon's power to pull the chains apart and smash the manacles, (4) the pitiable howling of the possessed man as the demon caused him to hit himself with stones.⁷¹ At the cost of losing the vividness produced by these details about the victim, Matthew omits them in order to place the spotlight on Jesus. He briefly summarizes them with the point that "they were so fierce that no one could pass that way."⁷² Matthew explains the problem created for people of the area, namely that the demoniacs blocked the roadway and posed a very real threat of danger to any passersby. This is different than what one finds in Mark. The demoniac lives in the tombs and therefore lives apart from the town and the regular roadway. In Mark, the demon possessed man lives alone among the tombs. He does frighten the people but does not pose a threat to their lives. Rather, the threat and misery is against his own person since the demon tries to kill him and keeps him awake all night long.

Matthew revises this episode, then, in order to set the scene for the true problem presented to the people by the demons that possess these two men.

The demoniacs' challenge

Mk 5:6-8 ⁶καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἀπὸ μακρόθεν ἔδραμεν καὶ προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ⁷ καὶ κράξας φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγει· τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου; ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν, μή με βασανίσῃς.⁸ ἔλεγεν γὰρ αὐτῷ· ἔξελθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. (And when he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him, and he shouted at the top of his voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me." For he had said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean Spirit!")

⁷¹ Of course, this is also related with the omission of Mark 5:18-20 as we will see later.

⁷² Gundry, *Matthew*, 157-58.

Mt 8:29 καὶ ἰδοὺ ἔκραξαν λέγοντες· τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ; ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς; (Suddenly they shouted, “What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?”)

Matthew has eliminated the statement that the demon in the man, upon seeing Jesus, ran forward to perform a bow before him. Matthew’s concern could well be that the listeners will conclude that, quite shockingly, Jesus is connected in some way to the demonic world. The demon treats Jesus like an authority over him and in a familiar manner uses Jesus’ name, asking what has put them at odds with each other. This dangerous interpretation is not without grounds since both Mark and Q hold controversy stories wherein Jesus is accused by his opponents of being so successful at casting out demons because he is in league with Beelzebul (Mk 3:22-30; Matt 12:22-32//Lk 11:14-20). That is, Jesus gains followers by a clever ruse of casting out these minor spirits so that the demons will have more persons to possess.

We note that Matthew omits from his story the feature of the demons seeing Jesus from afar and running forward to bow to him. The evangelist has already reported that the demons came out to meet Jesus on the road, as they do with all the passersby to frighten them. Matthew does not allow the use of Jesus’ name and instead retains only his divine epithet—Son of God.⁷³ With the use of this title instead of Jesus’ personal name the distance between these demons and Jesus is reinforced. Their question can be interpreted in a few ways. Morris interprets the phrase “what to us and to you?” as an emphasis on the distance between them.⁷⁴ Bratcher interprets the question as a hostile

⁷³ Morris’ suggestion that Matthew removes the name of Jesus to avoid “unnecessary attention to the humanity of Jesus” misses the issue of intimacy conveyed by the use of one’s first name in first century Greco-Roman society (Morris, *Matthew*, 210).

equivalent of “Do not bother us.”⁷⁵ That hostility is connected to the Matthean addition “do not torment us before the time,” so that the demons resent the Son of God arriving before the End time. Leiva-Merikakis concurs with that interpretation.⁷⁶ More explicitly, the demons hold that until the End time they may do whatever they like. They cannot match the Son of God, but they want to remain undisturbed to the end time. At root, the question points to the demons’ desperate recognition of the Son of God’s power to overturn the proposed timetable and bring them to torment now.⁷⁷

In the demons’ recognition of this authority and power Matthew has connected cosmic authority to the title Son of God.

Mk 5:7-8 ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν, μή με βασανίσῃς.⁸ ἔλεγεν γὰρ αὐτῷ· ἔξελθε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. (I adjure you by God, do not torment me! For he had said to him, “Come out of the man, you unclean Spirit!”)

Mt 8:29 ἦλθες ὧδε πρὸ καιροῦ βασανίσαι ἡμᾶς; (“Have you come here to torment us before the time?”)

Again, Matthew has changed the question in dramatic ways. First of all, the demons are not permitted to indicate that they have any power over Jesus by adjuring by God!⁷⁸ Next, he has changed the plea of the demons and the reason for it. According to the Markan account the demon begs for release from present torment, which is explained as the result

⁷⁴ Morris, *Matthew*, 210.

⁷⁵ R. G. Bratcher, *A Translator’s Guide to the Gospel of Matthew* (New York: UBS, 1981), 94 (cited in Blomberg, *Matthew*, 151).

⁷⁶ Leiva-Merikakis, *Matthew*, 380.

⁷⁷ A. H. Maynard finds that “every synoptic use of this idiom involves the recognition of the divine nature of Jesus by demons or by persons possessed by demons.” Probably this idiom should be understood with the end times as in John 2:4 (οὔπω ἔχει ἡ ὥρα μου, my hour has not yet come). See his article, “ΤΙ ΕΜΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΣΟΙ,” in *NTS* 31 (1985), 582-86.

⁷⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 81.

of Jesus' order that the demon leave. In Matthew there is a reference to the Endtime judgment "before the time" when the demons will be sent to their eternal punishment.⁷⁹ Surely the demons expect torment in hell as their ultimate destiny at the final judgment (Mt 25:41), but they do not expect it here and now.⁸⁰ Thus their question betrays their recognition that the authority of the Son of God is sufficient to expel them to their eternal punishment even now in advance of the time set for what is waiting for them at the end time judgment. They worry that Jesus has come to this world to inaugurate the end times (12:28).⁸¹

With these changes alone Matthew has already communicated to his audience the exalted status of Jesus and his cosmic power over the demons and time itself. Thus we can say with Carson that the question of the demons illustrates "the fullest meaning of the Son of God."⁸²

Matthew's omission of Mk 5:9-10

Mk 5:9-10 ⁹καὶ ἐπηρώτα αὐτόν· τί ὄνομά σοι; καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· λεγιῶν ὄνομά μοι, ὅτι πολλοὶ ἐσμεν. ¹⁰καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτὸν πολλὰ ἵνα μὴ αὐτὰ ἀποστείλῃ ἔξω τῆς χώρας. (Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many."¹⁰He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.)

Mark's verse 9 introduces a reference to Legions, which suddenly moves the narrative to a very present and earthly reality. Then, in v. 10, the plea of the demons not to leave the country further underlines an earthly perspective rather than the apocalyptic

⁷⁹ Keener, *Matthew*, 281; Gundry, *Matthew*, 159; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 151; Carson, *Matthew*, 218; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 82; Nolland, *Matthew*, 376.

⁸⁰ Morris, *Matthew*, 210.

⁸¹ Carson also observes the preexistence of Jesus here. See his book, "Matthew," 218.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 218.

threat of punishment that Matthew achieves. Robert Gundry suggests that the necessity of Jesus' knowing the name of the demon could give the impression that he was experiencing difficulty and was reverting to techniques of exorcism where the exorcist was required to know the name of the demon in order to expel it from the victim.⁸³ Jesus also knows about the demons because he is the Son of God. He does not ask what the demons' names are (cf. Mk 5:9, τί ὄνομά σοι). Jesus not only knows everything about the demons but also has absolute authority over them. By eliminating that shift in v. 9, Matthew avoids any distracting references to the soldiers stationed in the area. The fear of apocalyptic judgment in Matthew's version is allowed to ring out its witness to the authority of Jesus which these demons fearfully recognize.

The demons' request

Mk 5:10-12 ¹⁰καὶ παρεκάλει αὐτὸν πολλὰ ἵνα μὴ αὐτὰ ἀποστείλῃ ἔξω τῆς χώρας. ¹¹ἢν δὲ ἐκεῖ πρὸς τῷ ὄρει ἀγέλη χοίρων μεγάλη βοσκομένη. ¹²καὶ παρεκάλεσαν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· πέμψον ἡμᾶς εἰς τοὺς χοίρους, ἵνα εἰς αὐτοὺς εἰσέλθωμεν. (He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding and the unclean spirits begged him, "Send us into the swine; let us enter them.")

Mt 8:30-31 ³⁰ἢν δὲ μακρὰν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀγέλη χοίρων πολλῶν βοσκομένη. ³¹οἱ δὲ δαίμονες παρεκάλουν αὐτὸν λέγοντες· εἰ ἐκβάλλεις ἡμᾶς, ἀπόστειλον ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἀγέλην τῶν χοίρων. (Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. ⁸⁴ The demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.")

In Mark's version of the account, the demons are worried and fear that they will have to leave that part of the country. In Matthew, however, the demons' fear is to avoid

⁸³ Gundry, *Matthew*, 159.

⁸⁴ We might also notice here with Gundry Matthew's concern for the Torah observant Jesus that the herd of pigs is described 'at some distance.' Matthew's change of the pigs' location from close distance (on the hillside; πρὸς τῷ ὄρει) to far distance (at some distance from them; μακρὰν ἀπ' αὐτῶν) shows the author's attitude toward the pigs. Jesus should not be close to the pigs since they are unclean. See Gundry, *Matthew*, 160

premature punishment and torture before the end time.⁸⁵ In Mark's version the solution to their leaving the man but not leaving the country is for Jesus to send them into the pigs, creatures which for the Jews have no business being raised in the first place. The use of the imperative *πέμψον ἡμᾶς*, however, can sound as if the demons are ordering Jesus. In Matthew, the previous expression of the demons that they will face torment before the time makes the conditional sentence a true plea. *Ἀπόστειλον ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἀγέλην τῶν χοίρων* is certainly an imploration rather than a command.⁸⁶

Nolland brings attention to the fact that Matt 8:31 is the only use of 'δαίμων' in the New Testament. For him, this "underlines the fact that we have a window here onto the significance of Jesus in relation to the larger supernatural realm."⁸⁷ In other words, through the witness and obedience of two supernatural demons Jesus' identity as the Son of God is proved.

Thus, we may note, if the first story of the second cluster, the Stilling of the Storm, illustrates Jesus' divinity over the cosmic elements, this second story directly demonstrates Jesus', the Son of God's, divinity and authority over the supernatural forces of the demons.

⁸⁵ The demons' destiny is the abyss, where they should wait until the final judgment. However, their final judgment at the end times will be "the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Mt 25:41)." They will be confined in the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3) before the final judgment. Walter W. Wessel, *Mark*. EBC 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 658. We should note that Luke also is sensitive to the rather prosaic concerns of the demons and in his own version, the demons ask Jesus not to send him 'into the abyss (*εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον ἀπελθεῖν* Lk 8:31).'

⁸⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 160.

⁸⁷ Nolland, *Matthew*, 376.

Drowning of the demons

Mk 5:13 καὶ ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτοῖς. καὶ ἐξελθόντα τὰ πνεύματα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα εἰσῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους, καὶ ὥρμησεν ἡ ἀγέλη κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, ὥς δισχίλιοι, καὶ ἐπνίγοντο ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ. (So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.)

Mt 8:32 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὑπάγετε. οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες ἀπῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους· καὶ ἰδοὺ ὥρμησεν πᾶσα ἡ ἀγέλη κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἀπέθανον ἐν τοῖς ὕδασιν. (And he said to them, “Go!” So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water.)

In the Markan text, Jesus’ response is recorded in third person narration. Mark’s choice of the verb ἐπέτρεψεν αὐτοῖς (v. 13a) does away with any idea that Jesus was responding to a command in some way, but rather reinforces the authority of Jesus as “he gave them permission.” Matthew handles this with direct speech, a favorite feature of his redaction, in order to bring vividness to his narratives. For the first time, Jesus speaks and it is one word of command: “go (ὑπάγετε).” Gundry understand this imperative as demonstrative of Jesus’ authority:

For even greater enhancement of Jesus’ authority, “and he permitted them” (so Mark and Luke) changes to a command that is directly quoted: “and he said to them, ‘Go.’” Matthew likes ὑπάγετε (5, 6). “The unclean spirits” (so Mark) drop out because they detract from the figure of Jesus. The prefixing of ἀπ- rather than εἰς- to -ῆλθον makes the obedience of the demons match their sending exactly (ὑπό + στειλον). This revision highlights the effectiveness of Jesus’ authoritative command.⁸⁸

Luz also comments, “The evangelist could not have more effectively put Jesus at the center of the story.”⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Gundry, *Matthew*, 160.

⁸⁹ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 25.

Mk 5:13b ἐξελθόντα τὰ πνεύματα τὰ ἀκάθαρτα εἰσῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους (And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine).

Mt 8:32b οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες ἀπῆλθον εἰς τοὺς χοίρους (So they came out and entered the swine).

Matthew follows Mark's initial verb, but changes it to the participial form, ἐξελθόντες and then follows it with a synonym in the main verb, "ἀπῆλθον." As a result, there is a certain emphasis on the result of Jesus' permission, his power. He also changes the prefix of the verb εἰσῆλθον of Mark 5:13 into ἀπῆλθον. The use of prefix ἀπο rather than εἰς in ἀπῆλθον also conveys the expulsion of the demons with Jesus' order, "ὑπάγετε". Here we can confirm that by redacting the Markan text Matthew tries to illustrate the demon's perfect obedience to Jesus and Jesus' absolute authority over the demons.

The result of the demons' obedience to Jesus' command is dramatic. Matthew starts this section with one of his favorite expressions for the third time in this story: 'behold' (ἰδοὺ). When the demons come out and enter the swine, something unexpected happens. The idea is that the demons are so afraid of the end time torture they would even live in swine.

Mk 5:13 καὶ ὥρμησεν ἡ ἀγέλη κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, ὡς δισχίλιοι, καὶ ἐπνίγοντο ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ. (and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned in the sea.)

Mt 8:32c ὥρμησεν πᾶσα ἡ ἀγέλη κατὰ τοῦ κρημνοῦ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἀπέθανον ἐν τοῖς ὕδασιν (the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water.)

Here Matthew adds 'all (πᾶσα)' to the Markan text and removes 'about two thousand' (ὡς δισχίλιοι). By redaction of the Markan text, Matthew emphasizes the totality of the herd

rather than the large number of the pigs; in other words even one pig (thus even a demon) is not excluded in this rush to death. The consequence of the stampede is that all of them died in the water. This total destruction is strengthened one more time. While Mark expresses that they were drowned (ἐπνίγοντο), Matthew articulates that they died (ἀπέθανον). All pigs are dead and this sounds as if no demon can flee from Jesus' torture.

There have been debates about the possibility of the demon's death. Some scholars insist that the demons cannot die because they are spiritual beings,⁹⁰ while other scholars suggest that the demons died along with the pigs.⁹¹ The Markan and Matthean texts do not answer clearly whether the demons died or not. What the texts say is that the demons are inside the pigs and the pigs are dead. The concept of torture may help solve this question. Jesus will begin the torture before the end times during which the final judgment begins (Mt 8:29), and the demons will be sent to hell after the final judgment (Mt 25:41). The issue is what the content of the torture is in the context. The possible torture is: (1) suffering the fire in hell permanently, (2) imprisonment in the abyss until the final judgment. This torture seems to be related to water (cf. the abyss in Rev 20:3; Lk 8:31) as seen above. The demons do not like water probably because they are sent back to the abyss when they are drowned (Mt 12:43).⁹² In addition, the expulsion of the demons means the inauguration of the kingdom of heaven (Mt 12:28). When all demons are imprisoned in the abyss, the eschatology is fulfilled. Most importantly, the text says

⁹⁰ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 152; Carson, "Matthew," 219; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 228.

⁹¹ Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 324; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 223; Gundry, *Matthew*, 160; Patte, *Matthew*, 124; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 25; Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 390.

⁹² Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 84.

that Jesus will torture and not kill them. Thus the content of the torture seems to be the confinement to the abyss.⁹³ If this is correct, we can say that the demons in this episode do not die.

Aftermath

Mk 5:14-17 ¹⁴Καὶ οἱ βόσκοντες αὐτοὺς ἔφυγον καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν εἰς τὴν πόλιν καὶ εἰς τοὺς ἀγρούς· καὶ ἦλθον ἰδεῖν τί ἐστὶν τὸ γεγονός¹⁵ καὶ ἔρχονται πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ θεωροῦσιν τὸν δαιμονιζόμενον καθήμενον ἱματισμένον καὶ σωφρονοῦντα, τὸν ἐσχηκότα τὸν λεγιῶνα, καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν.¹⁶ καὶ διηγήσαντο αὐτοῖς οἱ ἰδόντες πῶς ἐγένετο τῷ δαιμονιζομένῳ καὶ περὶ τῶν χοίρων.¹⁷ καὶ ἤρξαντο παρακαλεῖν αὐτὸν ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων αὐτῶν. (The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. ¹⁷Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighborhood.)

Mt 8:33-34 ³³οἱ δὲ βόσκοντες ἔφυγον, καὶ ἀπελθόντες εἰς τὴν πόλιν ἀπήγγειλαν πάντα καὶ τὰ τῶν δαιμονιζομένων. ³⁴καὶ ἰδοὺ πᾶσα ἡ πόλις ἐξῆλθεν εἰς ὑπάντησιν τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν παρεκάλεσαν ὅπως μεταβῇ ἀπὸ τῶν ὁρίων αὐτῶν (The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴Then [lit. ‘and behold’] the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood.)

Matthew’s redaction streamlines the point. In Mark, an awkward doubling of proclamation holds up the main event of the people’s rejection of Jesus. First, the swineherds spread the news in the ‘city,’ wherever that would be, and also the countryside. It is not clear where the people are from or how many people come to see the results of Jesus’ exorcism. The idea that the people want to see the exorcized man for themselves is quite natural since according to Mark’s introduction the people had tried to chain and hobble the demonized man to no avail (v. 3). They would want to confirm the story of the swineherd. Mark describes the exorcized man as ‘clothed’ (we did not know

⁹³ Luke 8:31 supports this understanding.

he was naked) and sane, even-minded (σωφρονοῦντα). But then Mark narrates how the swineherds repeat what happened, which is certainly redundant. It succeeds in holding up the surprising and dark reaction of the people who beg Jesus to leave.

In the Matthean version, the swineherds make one proclamation to the town, not to a city and countryside. It is this whole town that comes out, not to see the exorcized demoniacs, but to see Jesus whose power effected the freeing of the two men. So here Matthew has turned the focus onto Jesus in front of this whole town. The exorcized men are left out of the narrative and the elements of their being now clothed and calm is a distraction from the main point of the story for Matthew, as Luz comments:

The realistic descriptions of the demoniacs' condition are omitted (Mark 5:3-5); indeed Matthew does not even mention that at the end they are well (Mark 5:15). Obviously, for Matthew the demoniacs are not important in themselves. Their literary function is to "mirror" the power of the Son of God. The abridgements are in the service of a positive intention for the narrative.⁹⁴

He can now report the amazing response of the gentile town, a collective rejection of Jesus: "They begged him to leave."

Matthew's omission of Mk 5:18-20

Mk 5:18-20 ¹⁸Καὶ ἐμβαίνοντος αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πλοῖον παρεκάλει αὐτὸν ὁ δαιμονισθεὶς ἵνα μετ' αὐτοῦ ᾖ. ¹⁹καὶ οὐκ ἀφῆκεν αὐτόν, ἀλλὰ λέγει αὐτῷ· ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου πρὸς τοὺς σοὺς καὶ ἀπάγγειλον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἠλέησέν σε. ²⁰καὶ ἀπῆλθεν καὶ ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν ἐν τῇ Δεκαπόλει ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, καὶ πάντες ἐθαύμαζον (¹⁸As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹But Jesus refused, and said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you." ²⁰And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.)

For those scholars who hold that the main theme of this second trio of miracles

⁹⁴ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 25.

concerns good discipleship teaching, Matthew's omission of the man who asks to follow Jesus in Mk 5:18-20 presents a problem.⁹⁵ In fact the redaction Matthew has performed on this story makes Jesus and his power the main focus of the miracle story. This is borne out if one recalls that the evangelist has not even felt it necessary to mention the resulting peace of the exorcized men. With Gundry we can affirm "Matthew did not allow a single detail of the sequel of the exorcism in order not to distract any attention from Jesus himself."⁹⁶ Thus, Matthew's excising of this conclusion results in the last statement of the miracle story being the fearful reaction of the whole town on account of the immensity of the power over the most vicious demoniac powers. They have not heard the cry of the demons, as the listener did, that Jesus is the Son of God.

The Main Theme of the Story

What then is the main theme of this story? Matthew's intent becomes clear when the story is seen in its sequence. The feature that stands out most clearly, as we have shown, is the power of Jesus as Son of God. In fact, this is the theme that is brought home throughout this second cluster. As the cosmos obeyed Jesus in the first story ("What sort of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Matt 8:27),⁹⁷ so now in this story, that identity is plainly called out by the demons who recognize him fully, "What have you to do with us, Son of God?" (Matt 8:29).

As in the Markan story, Jesus' power over the demons is so great that it frightens

⁹⁵ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 23; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 77; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 225.

⁹⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 161.

⁹⁷ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 229; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 76; Meier, *Matthew*, 90; idem, *The Vision of Matthew* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 70; R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 86.

the people, but, as we have seen, in the Matthean redaction the demons' fearful question shows the extent of Jesus' divinity. He has the power to preempt the coming Endtime punishments and cast the demons into their time of torment. This is the cosmic power that matches the story of the Stilling of the Storm. While Jesus' identity as Son of God was not clearly mentioned in the first story of the second cluster, but only the question leading to this answer, that answer is plainly affirmed albeit by the fear-filled recognition of Jesus' status by the demons.⁹⁸

Conclusion of the Story

This Christological confession then holds the primary point of this cluster of three miracles.⁹⁹ In the first cluster, Jesus' ministry of healing shows him as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy concerning the Messiah. Now, in this cluster, the identity of Jesus is further revealed. He already showed his authority over the nature, and now he is demonstrating his divine authority so great that the demons fear his using it to initiate their punishments. As we shall see in the next section, Matthew will now move to the third miracle story where the Son of God will show himself authorized to forgive sins.

The Third Stage: Healing of the Paralytic (Mt 9:1-8// Mk 2:1-12)

¹Καὶ ἐμβὰς εἰς πλοῖον διεπέρασεν καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν. ²καὶ ἰδοὺ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παραλυτικὸν ἐπὶ κλίνης βεβλημένον. καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν εἶπεν τῷ παραλυτικῷ, Θάρσει, τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι. ³καὶ ἰδοὺ τινες τῶν γραμματέων εἶπαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, Οὗτος βλασφημεῖ. ⁴καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν, Ἰνατί ἐνθυμεῖσθε ποιηρὰ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν; ⁵τί γάρ

⁹⁸ Brower, Kent E. "“Who Is This?”: Christological Questions in Mark 4:35-5:43," in *EvanQ* 81 (2009), 299. However, the disciples still do not know Jesus' real identity until the miracle of the sea walking (14:22-32) and Peter's confession (16:13-20). The sea-walking epiphany "provides a preliminary confession of Jesus' character by the disciples which prepares for the more climactic confession by Peter." See Heil, *Jesus Walking on the Sea*, 84.

⁹⁹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 229.

ἐστὶν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν, Ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν, Ἐγείρε καὶ περιπάτει; ὅτι εἰδότες ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας τότε λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ, Ἐγερθεὶς ἄρῃ σου τὴν κλίνην καὶ ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου. ⁷καὶ ἐγερθεὶς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. ⁸ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν τὸν δόντα ἐξουσίαν τοιαύτην τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

¹*And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town. ²And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."* ³*Then some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming."* ⁴*But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" ⁵For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'?' ⁶But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- he then said to the paralytic--"Stand up, take your bed and go to your home."* ⁷*And he stood up and went to his home. ⁸When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.*

Introduction

One remarkable feature of this miracle story is that this story is located at a context very different from that of Mark. While the first and second miracle stories of the second cluster come from the continuous passages of Mark 4:35-41 and Mark 5:1-20 respectively, suddenly the third miracle story is quoted from Mark 2:1-12. This sudden change in order is important in understanding the author's intention and should be explained with appropriate reasons why it is needed at the present place instead of the miracle story of a dead girl and a hemorrhaging woman in Mark 5:21-43.¹⁰⁰

The Matthean Redaction

Transition

Mk 2:1-2 ¹Καὶ εἰσελθὼν πάλιν εἰς Καφαρναοὺμ δι' ἡμερῶν ἠκούσθη ὅτι ἐν οἴκῳ ἐστίν. ²καὶ συνήχθησαν πολλοὶ ὥστε μηκέτι χωρεῖν μηδὲ τὰ πρὸς τὴν θύραν, καὶ ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον (¹When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. ²So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them).

¹⁰⁰ Mk 5:21-43 is re-located with good reasons as the first miracle story of the third cluster. See next chapter.

Mt 9:1 Καὶ ἐμβὰς εἰς πλοῖον διεπέρασεν καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν (And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town).

While Mark's Jesus comes back "home" having healed the leper (Mk 1:40-45) during his travels through Galilee, Matthew's Jesus arrives to his own 'town' having exorcized the two Gadarene demoniacs,¹⁰¹ and his rejection by those Gentile townspeople.¹⁰² It is notable that Matthew avoids using the notion of Jesus being "at home" (ἐν οἴκῳ) and instead uses 'his own town' (εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν πόλιν). This editing may reflect Matthew's sensitivity to Jesus' saying recorded earlier in Mt 8:20 where he warns the would-be disciples that the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.¹⁰³ Matthew could have accepted Mark's context of Jesus being in a house as he found the story in Mark, but he chose not to do so.

Jesus' forgiving of the paralytic's sins

Mk 2:3-5 ³καὶ ἔρχονται φέροντες πρὸς αὐτὸν παραλυτικὸν αἰρόμενον ὑπὸ τεσσάρων. ⁴καὶ μὴ δυνάμενοι προσενέγκαι αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ὄχλον ἀπεστέγασαν τὴν στέγην ὅπου ἦν, καὶ ἐξορύξαντες χαλῶσι τὸν κράβαττον ὅπου ὁ παραλυτικὸς κατέκειτο. ⁵καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ, Τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι (³Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. ⁵When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven").

Mt 9:2-3 ²καὶ ἰδοὺ προσέφερον αὐτῷ παραλυτικὸν ἐπὶ κλίνης βεβλημένον. καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ

¹⁰¹ Gundry, *Matthew*, 161-62.

¹⁰² Mt 9:1 can be linked more closely with Mt 8:34. As the town people begged Jesus to leave, Jesus returned to his own town. Anyway, this verse closely links the story of healing the demoniacs and the story of healing a paralytic. See Carson, *Matthew*, 220-221; Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 26.

¹⁰³ Matthew omits the Markan references to a house which can be understood as Jesus' house in 12:22; 15:15, 21; 17:19; 19:8. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 8-18, 87.

Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν εἶπεν τῷ παραλυτικῷ, Θάρσει, τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι.³ καὶ ἰδοὺ τινες τῶν γραμματέων εἶπαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, Οὗτος βλασφημεῖ (²And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." ³Then some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming").

In the Markan account, there is evidence of an earlier story being redacted by the insertion of a controversy story defending Jesus' authority to forgive sins. Scholars point to the fact that Mark's v. 5b presents Jesus' pronouncement of the forgiveness of sins, and the beginning of the controversy which climaxes with v. 10b, where Jesus pronounces the command of healing.¹⁰⁴

Matthew has completely excised the whole amazing situation that acts as the context for the paralytic's encounter with Jesus. Crowds do not surround a house where Jesus is teaching, so that the friends of the paralytic go up on the roof, and dig through it to lower the man. For Matthew, these astonishing boldness and fascinating narrative idea to listeners, are completely removed. In Mark, the extreme measures taken by the friends do not raise any objection from Jesus or anyone else on the grounds of their destructive behavior. Rather, Jesus sees only the confidence they have that he can restore their friend: Jesus is moved by their 'faith'.

The real problem with this part of the story is that it remains arrestingly ingenious and distracting to the lesson that has been inserted about the authority of Jesus to forgive sins.

Matthew has excised the entire context, and polished the core of the controversy story so that the issue of Jesus' authority to forgive sins takes the spotlight, while the

¹⁰⁴ Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 47. ("The insertion into an alien narrative is quite plain").

friends of the paralyzed man merely bring him out of the house on his bed. For their belief that Jesus can cure their friend, Jesus recognizes their faith, but that is all. The simple arrival of the paralytic, carried by some people, is apparently sufficient to Matthew in describing their faith,¹⁰⁵ and he just points to the presence of faith following the Markan text: “ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὴν πίστιν αὐτῶν (Jesus saw their faith).” Thus we may say that “the connection between faith and healing is pushed back into the background.”¹⁰⁶ Faith is not really the topic of this story as it was in the pre-Markan healing story, before the insertion of vv 6-10a.

In both versions of the story, however, the evangelist’s report that it was this expression of confidence in Jesus’ power to heal their friend that moved him to act and Jesus’ response is to pronounce the forgiveness of the paralyzed man’s sins. We note that Matthew first has Jesus encourage the sick man, urging *Θάρσει* (“Take heart!”). Matthew has probably been influenced by the use of this encouraging word from the Markan account of Jesus’ Walking on the Water (Mk 6:45-52), where Jesus makes the same call to his fearful disciples (Mk 6:50c//Matt 14: 27). Matthew inserts *Θάρσει* into the Markan account of the Women with the Hemorrhage (Mk 5:25-34) when Jesus pronounces that her faith has made her well (Mk 5:34//Matt 9:22).¹⁰⁷ Matthew’s addition brings an extra sense of compassion to the scene. Forgiveness of sin gives the

¹⁰⁵ Probably “their readiness to come to Jesus for they recognize that Jesus has authority to help” proves their faith. See Warrington, *Jesus the Healer*, 55.

¹⁰⁶ Schweizer, *Matthew*, 224.

¹⁰⁷ He omits its use by the crowds to encourage Bartimaeus when Jesus calls for him in Mark 10:49.

impression that “Jesus is doing surgery with words, that he is reaching down beneath the man’s paralysis to his guilt.”¹⁰⁸

The pronouncement of Jesus, however, is astonishing in its own right. We should notice immediately however, that there is no connection between the man’s paralysis and his sins, as some scholars have mistakenly proposed. If the intent had been to suggest that the paralysis was caused by the man’s sins, then when Jesus assured the man, “Take heart, Son, your sins are forgiven”, he should have leaped up, healed completely. As it is, the man remains paralyzed until Jesus’ word of healing at the conclusion of the story, as proof, of his authority to forgive sins. That is, no physical change in health would be visible as the soul was healed, but Jesus’ power to forgive sins and bring that healing would be confirmed by his power to bring wholeness to the physical body.

Mk 2:6-7 ἦσαν δέ τινες τῶν γραμματέων ἐκεῖ καθήμενοι καὶ διαλογιζόμενοι ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, ⁷Τί οὗτος οὕτως λαλεῖ; βλασφημεῖ· τίς δύναται ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἰς ὁ θεός; (⁶*Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts,* ⁷*"Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"*)

Matt 9:3 καὶ ἰδοὺ τινες τῶν γραμματέων εἶπαν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς· οὗτος βλασφημεῖ. (³*Then some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming"*).

While it is the scribes who charge Jesus with blasphemy in both stories, Matthew’s context makes their presence far more realistic. In the Markan story, it is unlikely that scribes would be seated among the crowds pressed into the house to hear Jesus’ teaching. Matthew’s reorientation of the story onto the road makes it more possible that scribes might be passing or watching. The charge of the scribes loses something of

¹⁰⁸ Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 329.

its anecdotal quality and takes on the polish of Matthew's focus. He deletes the description of them questioning in their heart and substitutes the more prosaic "said to themselves." He removes the question as to Jesus' motivation ("Why does this fellow speak in this way?"). More carefully yet, he has removed their statement "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Here he does not deny that Jesus is God. Rather he emphatically sustains the main charge that Jesus has committed blasphemy.

We could ask whether a first century listener knowledgeable of Jewish religious tradition and sensibility would agree that Jesus had blasphemed. It must be recognized that the exact definition of blasphemy before the later rabbinic movement, would have been wider encompassing. For example, *Mishnah* Sanhedrin 7.5 reads, "The blasphemer is not culpable unless he pronounces the Name itself."¹⁰⁹ Based on this narrow definition alone, Jesus could not be charged with blasphemy. What one sees in the various texts of the OT and the Qumran scrolls,¹¹⁰ however, is that forgiveness of sins is a Divine prerogative, and blasphemous behavior usurps the Divine prerogative.¹¹¹ Seen from this perspective, Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness of sins would be open to a charge of blasphemy in the sense of committing sacrilege. The Scribes are charging that Jesus is offending "God's majesty and honor by usurping a role considered to be uniquely his alone."¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ *Mishnah*. trans. by H. Danby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 392.

¹¹⁰ Exod. 34:6-7; 2 Sam 12:13; Pss 32:1-5; 51:3-3 [1-2], 9-11 [7-9]; 103:3; 130:4; Isa 43:25; 44:22; Dan 9:9; Zech 3:4; 1QS 2:9; CD 3:18; 20:34. See Gundry, *Mark*, 113.

¹¹¹ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 28.

¹¹² G. H. Twelftree, "Blasphemy," in *DJG* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 76-77. Carson also gives a similar definition: "Jesus claims to do something only God could do." See his book, *Matthew*, 222.

Some scholars might want to argue that Jesus is using the divine passive ‘ἀφίενταί (are forgiven)’ so that what Jesus means is that he knows God has done the forgiving.¹¹³ But that is not upheld by the account since Jesus himself will use his final healing of the paralytic to make the point that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.¹¹⁴

This issue of the forgiveness of sins holds a special significance for the Matthean community as seen in two other places. First, in Matthew’s infancy narratives the angel tells Joseph “She [Mary] will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21). It is certain that the name Jesus (Jeshua, or Joshua, or again Jehoshua) picks up the meaning of “salvation” as in “The Lord is salvation.” The translation of the name as “saving from sin” belongs to the explicit Matthean tradition alone. Again, in Matthew’s redaction of Mark’s narration of the Last Supper (Mk 14:22-25//Matt 26:26-29) Mk 14:24 reads “He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many’”, while Matt 26:28 holds, “for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” This attention of Matthew to Jesus as one who forgives sins explains, we suggest, his special attention to this account, and his special placement of it as the third story, the climax of the three accounts in the second cluster.

The challenge of the scribes in this account is the first controversy story in the

¹¹³ Bruner (*Matthew 1-12*, 329) explains that “by putting the verb in the passive, ‘are forgiven,’ Jesus gives the credit to God.” Leiva-Merikakis (*Fire of Mercy*, 401) also shows a similar interpretation: “It is clear that Jesus is not informing the ‘penitent’ of a forgiveness Jesus knows his Father has bestowed. In communicating power to the paralytic and in calling him ‘child,’ Jesus reveals that God is acting then and there in his Son, that his own actions and words on his own initiative are divine.”

¹¹⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 89; Gundry, *Matthew*, 163.

Matthean gospel. Matthew has deliberately raised the main issue, brought it to the fore, which is the authority of Jesus. Matthew brings the significance of Jesus' forgiveness of sins into the main focus as the one which will be supported when the paralytic picks up his bed and walks through the crowd.

To gauge the significance of this issue for Jesus' authority, it is instructive to note that as Davies and Allison comment, "there is very little evidence that the Messiah was expected to intercede or atone for sins."¹¹⁵ Gundry too affirms. "According to Jewish belief, not even the Messiah is going to forgive sins."¹¹⁶ Matthew here makes it clear that Jesus' true identity is found beyond the usual categories of the expected Messiah.¹¹⁷

To the scribes, Jesus is nothing but an ordinary human being who usurps God's unique role of forgiving sins. Probably the scribes think that Jesus is unable to heal the paralytic and he is pretending to do God's role instead to cover up.¹¹⁸ The scribes' response to Jesus' announcement makes their view of Jesus plain. For Matthew's believing community however, Jesus does not blaspheme, as the story now will reveal. Jesus' response to the Pharisees' thoughts

Mk 2:8-9 ⁸καὶ εὐθὺς ἐπιγνούς ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως διαλογίζονται ἐν ἑαυτοῖς λέγει αὐτοῖς, Τί ταῦτα διαλογίζεσθε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν; ⁹τί ἐστὶν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν τῷ παραλυτικῷ, Ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν, Ὑγείρε καὶ ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου καὶ περιπάτει; (⁸*At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you*

¹¹⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 90. See also Gundry, *Matthew*, 163; France, *Matthew*, 166.

¹¹⁶ Targum Isaiah 53:5b; K. Koch, "Messias und Sündenvergebung in Jesaja 53- Targum: Ein Beitrag zu der Praxis der aramäischen Bibelübersetzungen," in *JSJ* 3 (1972) 117-148; Gundry, *Mark*, 113.

¹¹⁷ 1 Enoch Chapters 37-71 regard the manlike figure as an eschatological heavenly being. Here we can see that the Enoch tradition is united with Dan 7, which will be explained below. See O. Michel, "Son of Man," in *NDNT*, 614-16.

¹¹⁸ Turner, *Matthew*, 247.

raise such questions in your hearts? ⁹Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'?)

Mt 9:4-5 ⁴καὶ ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τὰς ἐνθυμήσεις αὐτῶν εἶπεν, Ἵνατί ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρὰ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν; ⁵τί γάρ ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν, Ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν, Ὑγείρε καὶ περιπάτει; (⁴*But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'?"*)

In this section, Matthew follows Mark in that Jesus manifests his knowledge of the scribes' inner judgment against him with two counter questions, but increases the sense of a counter challenge and judgment of his own against the scribes. Matthew begins with change of Mark's 'τί' into the more challenging 'ἵνατί' more accurately translated: 'for what reason,'¹¹⁹ and more directly, pointedly replaces Mark's 'διαλογίζεσθε' with 'ἐνθυμεῖσθε πονηρὰ', charging their thoughts as "evil".¹²⁰ As a result, if the sense in Mark is that the scribes have religious doubts about Jesus' surprising response to the paralytic in this pronouncement of the forgiveness of sins, Matthew's handling presents them as evil in mind and heart. Carson, however, goes too far when he accuses them of being "untrue, unbelieving and blind to what is being revealed before their eyes", which is Jesus' divinity.¹²¹ We have to say that this is asking too much, after all. Rather, Matthew is interpreting Mark's tradition to convey the idea that the scribes were ready to accuse Jesus through evil motives.

The second counter-question explains why Jesus pronounces that the paralytic's sins are forgiven: "τί ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον (which is easier)?" In this verse, Matthew

¹¹⁹ BAGD, 378.

¹²⁰ Hendrickx, *Miracle Stories*, 138.

¹²¹ Carson, "Matthew," 222.

follows Mark except two minor changes. This verse is one good example showing that Matthew generally maintains Jesus' words. Thus, as Matthew presents the second question, his redaction creates a sense of dignified correction of Jesus, and not a kind of defensive answer such as we find in Mark.

Mk 2:9 τί ἐστὶν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν τῷ παραλυτικῷ, 'Ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν, 'Ἐγείρε , καὶ ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει (*Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'?*)?

Mt 9:5 τί γάρ ἐστιν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν, 'Ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν, 'Ἐγείρε καὶ περιπάτει (*For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'?*)?

The small changes that are made in Matthew's v. 5, present a tighter statement of the argument. The omission of 'τῷ παραλυτικῷ (to the paralytic)' moves the question away from this particular case of the paralytic, to a more general question. This also explains his elimination of 'ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου (take your mat).' The question concerns the authority to forgive sins or to perform a physical miracle: 'Ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι ('Your sins are forgiven') or 'Ἐγείρε καὶ περιπάτει (Stand up and walk).' We can ask in what sense εὐκοπώτερον is intended. There are two possible interpretations to this question: 1) Is the pronouncement of sins easier because one cannot see whether or not it is efficacious, but commanding a miracle demands proof and therefore is 'harder'? or 2) Is the pronouncement of sins 'harder' because one takes on oneself the authority that must be conferred from above, while in relation, commanding a healing is seen performed by others and belongs to a lesser gift from heaven. Many scholars support the first interpretation that Jesus announces forgiveness of sin first because it is easier to

forgive sin rather than to heal.¹²² For example, Bruner focuses on the unnecessary proof of forgiveness.¹²³

The easier thing to say is forgiveness, because nothing visible is needed for proof in an invisible relation with God. It is definitely harder to say a healing word because the truth or falsehood of this can be instantly verified. Jesus could have been accused of a cheap sensationalism – or even of making the most audacious claims (forgiveness of sins) – without having to deliver any proof whatever. Jesus intends to keep the issue focused where he wants it: on his seemingly blasphemous claim. The healing will be used to prove the deeper reality of Jesus' divine investiture.

Davies and Allison also support the first interpretation. They focus on the difficult healing which will result in the scribes' interest in the easy forgiveness of sin.¹²⁴

Although it is certainly not easier to forgive sins than it is to heal disease, it is easier to pronounce the forgiveness of sins than to command someone to walk, this because only the latter can be objectively verified. But Jesus, as the following verses show, can in fact heal the paralytic. So he can do the harder thing, and this should cause his critics to wonder whether he cannot also forgive sins.

The common factor that those scholars share in supporting the first interpretation is that forgiving sins is easier because it does not need proof. Jesus has no difficulty in pronouncing forgiveness of sin because there is no way to show the visible result. But it

¹²² “His question assumes that it is easier to say that your sins are forgiven than to say that a lame man should get up and walk, for only the latter statement must be backed up with action.” (Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 28); “The scribes think that Jesus pronounced forgiveness of sins because it was easier to do that than to heal. But Jesus says that the imminent healing will demonstrate his authority to forgive sins. The man's immediate healing underlines his authority to forgive sins as Son of God,” (Turner, *Matthew*, 248); “It is easier to say that sins are forgiven, for it is impossible for the bystanders to confirm or refute what has been said. But on a deeper level, the second statement is easier; a healer can say that, but it takes deity really to forgive sins” (Morris, *Matthew*, 216); “It is obviously easier to say that someone's sins are forgiven without fear of contradiction. So the prove his authority for making the easier claim, he performs the harder task (the typically Semitic from-the-lesser-to-the-greater logic)” (Blomberg, *Matthew*, 154).

¹²³ Bruner, *Matthew* 1-12, 332.

¹²⁴ Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 8-18, 92.

is doubtful if this is the only criterion we should consider in judging which is easier.

Two Matthean scholars conclude the second meaning is the one intended by Matthew, that is that pronouncing forgiveness of sins is not something ‘easy’, but rather demands calling on one’s greater authorization from God, and therefore ‘harder’, than commanding a healing. Carson states,¹²⁵ “Jesus claims to do the more difficult thing. To the scribes, healing is easier than forgiving sins because only God forgive sins. But Jesus is doing more difficult things.” Nolland, for his part explains:¹²⁶

The answer is that it all depends on whether the words ‘your sins are forgiven’ as more than empty words. It is easier to say ‘your sins are forgiven’ if you are a charlatan because there is no immediate check; it is easier to say ‘get up and walk’ if you are the genuine article because restoration of physical ability pales into insignificance beside the benefit of full and complete forgiveness.

Because Jesus is the divine being, healing is easier than the forgiveness of sin and the benefit of healing is secondary to that of forgiving sins. Thus Jesus is doing the harder one first.

In sum, those scholars who support the first interpretation generally focus on the fact that forgiveness does not require any visible evidence. However, this interpretation seems less persuasive. The question ‘which is easier?’ asks which is easier to bring the same result: healing the paralytic. When Jesus mentions easiness, he does not mean easiness of the process, but easiness of the work. One result of forgiving sin is healing. While healing does not remove sins, forgiving sins results in healing. Thus, Jesus is asking which the easier way for healing the paralytic is. Of course, the easier way is

¹²⁵ Carson, “Matthew,” 222.

¹²⁶ Nolland, *Matthew*, 381.

direct healing because even the healing Messiah can do it; forgiving sins is harder

because it belongs to the divine realm. Jesus is choosing harder way to show that he has the authority of forgiving sins as will be seen in the next verse.

Jesus' explanation for his forgiveness of sins

Mk 2:10-12a ¹⁰ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιεῖν ἁμαρτίας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ, ¹¹Σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου. ^{12a}καὶ ἠγέρθη καὶ εὐθὺς ἄρας τὸν κράβαττον ἐξῆλθεν ἔμπροσθεν πάντων, (¹⁰But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- he said to the paralytic-- ¹¹"I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." ^{12a}And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them;)

Mt 9:6-7 ⁶ἵνα δὲ εἰδῆτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀφιεῖν ἁμαρτίας τότε λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ, Ἐγερθεὶς ἄρον σου τὴν κλίνην καὶ ὕπαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου. ⁷καὶ ἐγερθεὶς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ (⁶But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- he then said to the paralytic-- "Stand up, take your bed and go to your home." ⁷And he stood up and went to his home).

Here Matthew follows Mark. But the significance of "Son of Man" for Matthew makes the use of the title here a pronouncement of his divine authorization. And with this, the story receives its climactic conclusion.

In the Markan gospel, this is the first time Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man, and it is clear that there is a divine authority that is claimed immediately.

Following this usage, the second time Mark uses it, is in the pronouncement story of Mk 2:23-28 where Jesus uses this self-designation to claim himself "Lord of the Sabbath".

The problem is that following these two usages of the titles, the further sense of a divine authority is not at all clear. Mk 8:31, 39; 9:9, 31, 10:33, 10:45 all feature the vulnerable Jesus who will suffer and be raised and do not suggest the power of the heavenly figure of Dan 7 13-14. Only in Mk 13:24; 14.42 and 64 is it clear that the Tradition identifies

Jesus as the one who is to fulfill Dan 7:13-14.

In Matthew, the Son of Man as the fulfillment of Dan 7:13-14 is carefully underlined in a sequence of continuous, developing statements of his heavenly empowerment, his return and his role as final judge. Matthew's first presentation of the title is in the "first intervening pericopae", Matt 8:19-20, in Jesus' response to the Scribe who wishes to follow him: "The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." This first reference, drawn from Q (Q 9:58) conveys the sense of the vulnerability of Jesus, a sense that is certainly also found in Mark as well. In this third story of the cluster that follows that story, Matthew now asserts something of the full dimensions of that self-designation, Son of Man. This is Jesus claiming his ἐξουσία. Matthew follows Mark but with a significant juxtaposition of the statement, as Gundry astutely observes:¹²⁷

He brings forward ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς from the end of the clause, where it tells the place of forgiveness, to a position right after ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, where it tells the place of the Son of Man's authority. The stress thus shifts from forgiveness of sins to the figure of Jesus as the Son of Man and, more particularly, to the demonstration that the Son of man, a heavenly figure in Dan 7:13-14, retains his authority on earth.

The listener to the gospel now is aware that the title of Son of Man, as used by Jesus, speaks to its divine reference. That is, here in this final miracle story, Matthew has opened up another aspect of Jesus' identity. While this particular text affirms Jesus' authority as Son of Man on earth, the very next usage of the title is found in special Matthean material, embedded in the Mission Speech, Matthew 10, the speech that follows directly on the third and last cluster of miracle stories. There in Matt 10:17-25, v. 23 reads, "When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you

¹²⁷ Gundry, *Matthew*, 164.

will not have gone through all the town of Israel before the Son of Man comes”. Here then, just as Matt 9:6a asserts Jesus’ authority on earth, Matthew 10:23 asserts his role as the coming Judge, the Son of Man coming down from heaven. The sequence with which Matthew develops this identity for Jesus as the fulfillment of the Dan 7:13-14 underline the major significance of this title for Matthew.¹²⁸

This dissertation does not allow for an excursus on Matthew’s use of the Son of Man and the many scholarly treatments that address various aspects of its significance for the evangelist,¹²⁹ but we only wish to note that, unlike Mark, Matthew has sequenced his use of his sources and redaction so that this miracle story now makes plain the divine attribution that belongs to the title Son of Man for Matthew.

Jesus does not clarify whether the healing of the man is seen as the easier or as the harder act. Rather he tells the scribes that the success of the healing will prove

¹²⁸ Matt 12:8 // Mk 2:28 claims for Jesus his authority over the Sabbath as Son of Man; in Matt 13:37, 41 the title occurs in his interpretation of his special material “The Parable of the Tares” (13:24-30), where he first identifies the Son of Man as the one who sows the good seed (v. 37), and then explains the burning of the tares in v. 41-43: “The Son of Man will send out his angels and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sins and all evildoers and they will throw them into the furnace of fire where there will be the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” In Matthew 16:27, Matthew inserts into the Markan speech of Jesus on the necessity to be ready for suffering (Mk 8:34-9:1), his own verse 16:27, “For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done.” Then, into Mark’s text of Jesus promises to Peter and those who have followed him of family and houses and blessings here as well as in the life to come (Mk 10:28-30), Matthew inserts the Q saying, with his own introductory contextualization, “Truly, I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” From here he follows the eschatological chapter of Mark. His special material provides the scene of judgment in Matt 25:31-46, where it begins, “When the Son of Man comes in all his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory” (v.31). The judgment then is described.

¹²⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 1-7*, 80-85; I. H. Marshall, “Son of Man,” in *DJG* (Downers Groves, IL: IVP, 1992), 776-9; Ulrich Luz, “The Son of Man in Matthew: Heavenly Judge or Human Christ?” in *JSNT* 48 (1992), 3-21; idem, “Matthean Christology Outlined in Theses,” in *Studies in Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005), 83-96; M. Casey, *Son of Man* (London: SPCK, 1979); G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew* (New York: Harper, 1973); B. Lindars, *Jesus Son of Man* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983). O Michel, “ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου,” in *NDNT* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 614; James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), esp. 86-87, 95-97; S. Kim, *The Son of Man As the Son of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), esp. 99-102.

whether or not God has authorized him, or whether he has offended God with *hubris*.

The man is able to do just as Jesus has commanded. As in Mark, the man's healing is proof not only of Jesus' divine power over nature, but also an affirmation that he has been authorized to forgive sins by God. With this, Matthew is affirming the sacred and supernatural significance of the title "Son of Man" for Jesus.

The crowds' response

Mk 2:12b ὥστε ἐξίστασθαι πάντας καὶ δοξάζειν τὸν θεὸν λέγοντας ὅτι Οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν. (so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!")

Mt 9:8 ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ ὄχλοι ἐφοβήθησαν καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν τὸν δόντα ἐξουσίαν τοιαύτην τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. (When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings)

The story ends with the wonder of the crowds. The scribes disappear from the scene, and the crowds respond to Jesus' compassionate forgiveness, and his cure of this paralyzed man. The scribes disappear from the story just as they do in Mark. Nolland suggests that crowds are filled with awe as in the presence of God (cf. Mt 17:6).¹³⁰ In Mark, the reason that the crowds praise God is because of the miracle. However, in Matthew Jesus' divine authority as a divine Son of Man is emphasized by repeating the word "authority": "They glorified God, who had given such authority (ἐξουσίαν τοιαύτην) to human beings."¹³¹ It must be noted here that "crowds" are not those of the inner circle but those who are observing. Their understanding of the event is sufficient however, in that unlike the scribes, they are willing to be in awe. Again, we could note with France that while healing could be associated with a Messiah, the forgiveness of sin

¹³⁰ Nolland, *Matthew*, 383.

¹³¹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 96; Nolland, *Matthew*, 383.

is not an expectation.¹³² Jesus is more than the Messiah, and his self-designation as Son of Man speaks of a divine identity far more exalted than ‘Messiah.’ This title suggests Jesus’ divinity as Son of God.

Conclusion of the Second Cluster

If the first cluster (8:1-17) illustrates Jesus as the merciful healing Messiah from Isa 53:4, the second division of three miracle stories (8:23-9:8) describes Jesus’ divinity. However, just as in the first cluster, Matthew apparently arranges the three miracle stories progressively according to the MTSP writing technique.

The first story is a nature miracle story that describes the nature’s obedience to Jesus. Even the wind and waves obey Jesus, and this obedience is not expected from the messianic agent. The disciples in the boat are surprised at the obedience and are led to contemplate about Jesus’ identity: Jesus is more than the messianic agent.

Jesus’ divine identity is clearly mentioned in the second miracle story by the demons, the main characters along with Jesus. They know that Jesus is the Son of God, and they cannot help but ask for his mercy and follow his decision. The demons’ witness cannot be wrong because they have supernatural knowledge. This witness is supported strongly with Matthew’s redaction of one demoniac into two.

Finally, Jesus’ divine identity as the divinely empowered Son of Man suggests that his identity goes far beyond that. The Son of Man in Daniel 7:13-14 is in fact a divine figure, but in Jesus’ forgiveness of sins a far more intimate relationship with vulnerable humans and suffering humanity is indicated. Jesus himself explains that his

¹³² France, *Matthew*, 166.

healing of the paralytic will show if he has the authority to forgive sins. With the declaration, and here the irony of the scribal outrage is clearly indicated: Jesus is acting like God. Yet their thoughts that immediately conclude that Jesus is a blasphemer comes from an evil mind and heart, just as Jesus tells them outright. Although the crowds still do not know Jesus' divinity, this self-identification as Son of Man brings out Jesus' divinity to the listener. This divinity of Jesus is the highlight of the second cluster. We may summarize the MTSP structure of Matthew 8-9 as follows;

The Second Cluster (Matthew 8:23-9:8): "Jesus, the Divine Being"

- A. Jesus demonstrates his divine authority over the nature (Matt 8:23-27)
- B. The demons obey Jesus without any resistance, calling him 'Son of God' (Matt 8:28-34)
- C. Jesus himself as Son of Man demonstrates also a divine empowerment that suggests far more (9:1-8)

In sum, we can say that this second cluster demonstrates Jesus' divinity through diverse types of miracle stories. In each story of the cluster then, Jesus is identified as the divine being, even though the various groups of Israel do not recognize him. In this process, we can observe a progressive development through the description of Jesus' identity from Jesus' being the messianic agent who heals every disease to a divine being who governs the nature, who is recognized by the demons as having supernatural power over them to initiate their sufferings before the time, and finally as the "Son of Man" who takes it upon himself to forgive sins.

CHAPTER SIX

MTSP IN THE THIRD CLUSTER OF MIRACLE STORIES

The Preface to the Cluster: The Second of the Intervening Pericopae (Matt 9:9-17)

Introduction: Matthew's Intervening Pericopae (9:9-17)

These second intervening pericopae are in the sequence found in Mark, but their positioning in Matthew affects their function. That is, just as in Mark, the healing of the paralytic/forgiveness of his sins (Matt 9:2-8//Mk 2:1-12) is followed by the call of Matthew (Matt 9:9//Mk 2:13-14) and then the controversy story of Jesus' defense of his joining in the celebratory dinner of Matthew and his tax-collector friends (Matt 9:10-13//Mk 2:15-17). Following this, Jesus is asked as to why he does not teach his disciples to fast as the disciples of John and the Pharisees are trained to do (Matt 9:14-17//Mk 2:18-22). Due to Matthew's repositioning of the paralytic story, however, these accounts are now positioned to intervene between the second and third cluster of miracle stories.

We have already seen that between the first and second cluster of miracle stories, Matthew situated two Q pericopae which address the cost of discipleship (Matt 8:18-22 //Q 9:57-62). First the Scribe, a prestigious candidate, asks for discipleship and is cautioned about homelessness (Matt 8:19-20), after which an actual disciple of Jesus requests time to return home for the laudable reason to 'bury' his father, but receives Jesus' stark refusal (Matt 8:21-22).

This first pause after the first cluster then allowed the second cluster of miracle

stories to commence. In this cluster Jesus, who has been previously identified as the Messiah in the first cluster, is shown to be the divinely empowered Son of Man as recognized both by his command over Nature (Matt 8:23-27) and by his authority to forgive sins (Matt 9:1-8)

In this second pause which separates the second cluster from the third, Matthew returns to the issue of discipleship. This time Matthew will bring out the unconventional and unprejudiced Jesus in his choosing a disciple from the outcast tax collectors (Matt 9:9), and in his celebrating with them at table (Matt 9:10-13). He will be shown to eschew the training of his disciples in the pious practice of fasting, for his own reasons (Matt 9:14-17). Two final sayings (Matt 9:16-17) serve to punctuate the fact that Jesus' followers are best separated from Jewish conventions (Matt 9:16-17g/Mk 2:21-22), but we will notice that Matthew adds his own special clarification, "and so both are preserved".

The Second Intervening Pericopae: The Unconventional Jesus as Master of Disciples

The Calling of Matthew (9:9) and Jesus' Dining with Matthew and His Friends (9:10-13)

Matt 9:9-13 ⁹Καὶ παράγων ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐκεῖθεν εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον καθήμενον ἐπὶ τὸ τελώνιον, Μαθθαῖον λεγόμενον, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Ἀκολούθει μοι. καὶ ἀναστὰς ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ. ¹⁰Καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτοῦ ἀνακειμένου ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πολλοὶ τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἐλθόντες συνανέκειντο τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ. ¹¹καὶ ἰδόντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, Διὰ τί μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίει ὁ διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν; ¹²ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας εἶπεν, Οὐ χρεῖαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλ' οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες. ¹³πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε τί ἐστίν, Ἐλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν· οὐ γὰρ ἤλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλούς (*As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. ¹⁰And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹²But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners"*).

Mk 2:13-17 ¹³Καὶ ἐξῆλθεν πάλιν παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν· καὶ πᾶς ὁ ὄχλος ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτούς. ¹⁴καὶ παράγων εἶδεν Λευὶν τὸν τοῦ Ἀλφαίου καθήμενον ἐπὶ τὸ τελώνιον, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Ἀκολούθει μοι. καὶ ἀναστὰς ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ. ¹⁵Καὶ γίνεται κατακεῖσθαι αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πολλοὶ τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ συνανέκειντο τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· ἦσαν γὰρ πολλοὶ καὶ ἠκολούθουν αὐτῷ. ¹⁶καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς τῶν Φαρισαίων ἰδόντες ὅτι ἐσθίει μετὰ τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν καὶ τελωνῶν ἔλεγον τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, Ὅτι μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίει; ¹⁷καὶ ἀκούσας ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς [ὅτι] Οὐ χρειαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλ' οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες· οὐκ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁμαρτωλούς (¹³*Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. ¹⁴As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. ¹⁵And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples-- for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹⁷When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners").*

In this combination of call story and controversy apophthegm, Matthew differs little from the Markan text. In v. 9b, Matthew has replaced Mark's "Levi, Son of Alphaeus" (v. 14b) with "Matthew". He excises the 'γὰρ' clause in Mark 2:15 as unnecessary. In v. 11a, he also corrects Mark's "scribes of the Pharisees" (Mk v. 16a) with "Pharisees". In Matt v. 11c, he inserts into the Pharisees question, the designation "Teacher" for Jesus. This immediately signals Matthew's audience that they regard him only as such, since the proper title for Jesus in Matthew's gospel is always 'Lord', as has been noted earlier.

In Jesus' reply to the Pharisees, Matthew has altered the character of Jesus' answer from a simple defense ("Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick" [Matt 9:12cd/Mk 2:17cd/]) to an offense which includes the admonition of the Pharisees: "Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6). In this Jesus presents himself to Matthew's audience as the one who is more faithful to

God's heart, imbued with God's spirit of mercy, and knowledgeable in the scriptures than the Pharisees. Thus the image of the doctor is connected not only to helping those who are sick, but to the concern which moves the doctor to do so. Only then does Matthew pick up Mark's doctor image with the extra significance added from Hosea 6:6: "For, I have come to call not the righteous but sinners" (Matt 9:13d/Mk 2:17e). We must note the proximity of Jesus' "I" pronouncement directly after the quotation of Hosea 6:6, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."¹ Does Matthew desire to communicate an intimacy with the Divine?

Bultmann's study of the apophthegms concludes that these accounts really act as teachings for the would-be disciple. In this case the mercy of Jesus overrides a religious aversion and avoidance of those living in a renegade life in relation to Torah. That is, the way that Matthew uses this controversy story further underlines Jesus' divine authority of Jesus, and acts as something of a declaration that God's mercy will be the deciding factor for him², including the selection of disciples from among socially diverse groups, like the tax collector, Matthew.³

The Question about Fasting (9:14-17)

Matt 9:14-17 ¹⁴Τότε προσέρχονται αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰωάννου λέγοντες, Διὰ τί ἡμεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι νηστεύομεν [πολλά], οἱ δὲ μαθηταί σου οὐ νηστεύουσιν; ¹⁵καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Μὴ δύνανται οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος πενθεῖν ἐφ' ὅσον μετ' αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ὁ νυμφίος; ἐλεύσονται δὲ ἡμέραι ὅταν ἀπαρθῇ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὁ νυμφίος, καὶ τότε νηστεύουσιν. ¹⁶οὐδεὶς δὲ ἐπιβάλλει ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου ἐπὶ ἱματίῳ παλαιῷ·

¹ Matthew will use this reference in 12:7, where the Pharisees will challenge Jesus on his disciples plucking grains on the Sabbath. This text is dependent on Mark 2:23-28, but Matthew will add to the rebuttal of Jesus, "But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice', you would not have condemned the guiltless. "

² Hagner, *Matthew*, 239;

³ Leivi-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy*, 420.

αἶρει γὰρ τὸ πλήρωμα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ ἱματίου καὶ χειρόν σχίσμα γίνεται. ¹⁷οὐδὲ βάλλουσιν οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς· εἰ δὲ μή γε, ῥήγνυνται οἱ ἀσκοί καὶ ὁ οἶνος ἐκχέεται καὶ οἱ ἀσκοὶ ἀπόλλυνται· ἀλλὰ βάλλουσιν οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς καινοὺς, καὶ ἀμφότεροι συντηροῦνται (¹⁴*Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?"* ¹⁵*And Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.* ¹⁶*No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made.* ¹⁷*Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved"*).

Mk 2:18-22 ¹⁸Καὶ ἦσαν οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰωάννου καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι νηστεύοντες, καὶ ἔρχονται καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Διὰ τί οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰωάννου καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ τῶν Φαρισαίων νηστεύουσιν, οἱ δὲ σοὶ μαθηταὶ οὐ νηστεύουσιν; ¹⁹καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Μὴ δύνανται οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νυμφῶνος ἐν ᾧ ὁ νυμφίος μετ' αὐτῶν ἐστὶν νηστεύειν; ὅσον χρόνον ἔχουσιν τὸν νυμφίον μετ' αὐτῶν οὐ δύνανται νηστεύειν. ²⁰ἐλεύσονται δὲ ἡμέραι ὅταν ἀπαρθῇ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὁ νυμφίος, καὶ τότε νηστεύουσιν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. ²¹οὐδεὶς ἐπίβλημα ῥάκους ἀγνάφου ἐπιράπτει ἐπὶ ἱμάτιον παλαιόν· εἰ δὲ μή, αἶρει τὸ πλήρωμα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὸ καινὸν τοῦ παλαιοῦ καὶ χειρόν σχίσμα γίνεται. ²²καὶ οὐδεὶς βάλλει οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς παλαιούς· εἰ δὲ μή, ῥήξει ὁ οἶνος τοὺς ἀσκοὺς καὶ ὁ οἶνος ἀπόλλυται καὶ οἱ ἀσκοί· ἀλλὰ οἶνον νέον εἰς ἀσκοὺς καινοὺς (¹⁸*Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"* ¹⁹*Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the bridegroom is with them, can they? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.* ²⁰*The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.* ²¹*No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak; otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made.* ²²*And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins"*).

In Matt 9:14-17, Matthew makes only a few additions to Mark's apophthegm but each is significant. First, he identifies the questioners, as Mark does not. Since they are disciples of John the Baptist, the apophthegm becomes 'scholastic'; the disciples of John are friends of this gospel, not enemies.⁴ He adds "πολλά," to the description of the fasting of the Pharisees and John's disciples, which seems to emphasize their hypocrisy in external devotions. Here the question asked of Jesus does stand apart from ordinary

⁴ See Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 18.

piety, and the fact of its survival in Mark stands as a remarkable decision of Jesus and indeed worthy of a question.⁵ One supposed Matthew's focus would be trained on the banquet metaphor of friends of the bridegroom who wait for his return (Matt 9:15//Mk 2:19-20). The two sayings that are now attached (the new patch on the old garment and the new wine in a fresh wine-pouch [Matt 9:16-17//Mk 2:21-22]) declare the greater wisdom of Christian communities from Jewish ones. Matthew copies them, but as we stated above, he adds, "and so, both are preserved". This addition shows that Matthew does not endorse a substitution theology where Judaism is supplanted. Rather, he sees that it has its own integrity, but a stance that will not allow for the mandate of Jesus.

The Third Cluster (9:18-34): "Spread of Jesus' Fame"

Introduction

Now that Jesus is described as the merciful healing Messiah and the Son of God, Jesus' fame for his miracles is being spread over the whole region. In the first cluster Jesus shows mercy as the healing Messiah of Isa 53:4 who heals all kinds of diseases, and in the second, his identity escalates to show him as the Son of God. Nature forces obey him, the demons recognize his cosmic authority, and he shows himself to be authorized to forgive sins on earth as the Son of Man. According to the MTSP writing technique, therefore, the second cluster should be followed by a progressive development.

Theme of the Third Cluster

Matthew creates this third cluster by what appears to be a curious resituating of miracle stories from Mark and from Q. The first two miracles (Matt 9:18-26) are the

⁵ This remembrance of Jesus' not teaching fasting contrasts Matthew's insertion in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt 6:16-18, which offers counsels on how one should fast discretely. .

interwoven pair drawn from Mark (Mk 5:21-43), The Healing of the Woman with the Hemorrhage and the Raising of the Daughter of a synagogue official. The next miracle is Matthew's own story of Jesus' healing of two Blind men (Matt 9:27-31), one of his doublets dependent on the Markan story of Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46-52).⁶ The final miracle is an exorcism story where Jesus demonstrates a complete power to exorcize a demon who has kept a man mute (Matt 9:32-34), another doublet, this time largely dependent on Q (Lk 11:14).⁷ Actually although Matthew has borrowed three pericopae, the resulting number of miracles is four:

Matt 9:18-26//Mk 5:21-43	The Healing of the Woman and Raising of the Girl
Matt 9:27-31//Mk 10:45-52	The Healing of the Blind
Matt 9:32-34//Q 11:14	The Expulsion of the Demon that Made a Man Mute

Faith as the Motivating Theme: The Problem for the Theory in Matt 9:32-34

The major question which must be asked is why Matthew has repositioned these miracles? Is his intent to teach the importance of faith as several scholars have argued?⁸ As we will recall, Held is one of the scholars who are convinced that it is the theme of faith which explains this juxtaposition of material,⁹ but despite his arguments, Luz remains unconvinced, noting that in the final story of the exorcism (9:32-34) there is no

⁶ A more pronounced representation of the Markan narrative is found in Matt 20:29-34. Again there are two blind men. Quite possibly, Matthew is attributing to Jesus the second story of Jesus' giving sight in Mk 8:22-27, the Blind Man of Bethsaida, which he excises from his gospel.

⁷ In Q, the miracle story prefaces the defense of Jesus against charges that he casts out demons by Beelzebul. Matthew 12:22-24 repeats the story and the charges that follow Matt 12:25-37. Here however, he simply attributes the miracle to Jesus, and notes that he was accused by the Pharisees, but does not follow with the defense as one finds in Q.

⁸ Among them are Thompson, "Reflections on Matthew 8-9," 379-85; Burger, "Jesu Taten," 286; Kingsbury, "Observation of the Miracle Chapters," 562; Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 2; Hare, *Matthew*, 105; Turner, *Matthew*, 257; Green, *Matthew*, 125-27; Bruner, *Matthew* 1-12, 341.

⁹ Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 245-46; 248-49.

mention of faith on the part of the recipient.¹⁰ Douglas R. Hare holds that where one finds Matthew's theme of faith is in the "faith response of the audience".¹¹ The problem here is that the crowds respond to a miracle they witness. They are not the ones who brought the demonized man to Jesus. Their function is to be amazed at Jesus and reflect to the listener the effect that Jesus' miracle had on everyone there: "καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες, Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ (And the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel")." The crowd then identifies Jesus as unique, and his miracle like nothing they have seen in Israel. Here we must also note that Matthew has then continued the theme of a response to Jesus in the negative judgment of the Pharisees who accuse Jesus of being in league with Satan, "the ruler of the demons". The evangelist focuses on responses to Jesus' miracles then, and not on who has faith that Jesus will be able to perform one.¹²

To all this, Held answers that one could not consider Matt 9:32-34 a miracle story at all, but rather as a response to Jesus, nothing more.¹³

This miracle report draws the concluding line under the whole collection in that it shows – in a certain sense even stylistically – how people behave in the presence of the miraculous activity of Jesus. For this purpose the short pericope which serves as an introduction to the Beelzebub controversy was most appropriate (Luke 11.14-15). This is how it comes about that Matthew has twice worked it into his Gospel (9.32-34; 12.22-24).

Some scholars agree with Held that Matthew did not regard this Q account as a miracle

¹⁰ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 39 footnote 3.

¹¹ Douglas R. Hare, *Matthew* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1993), 105.

¹² Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 247; Patte *Matthew*, 134; Blomberg, *Matthew*, 163; Meier, *Matthew*, 100; Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 8-18, 138; Nolland, *Matthew*, 402.

¹³ Held, "Matthew as Interpreter," 247.

story,¹⁴ but all that is necessary for a miracle account is a notification of the difficulty, the notification of what the hero did, and the effect of it. Thus, this is certainly a miracle story, since it holds all three elements. What is important to note is that he could have inserted elements of redaction to introduce faith on the part of those who brought the man, but did not. In fact, as we shall see, he further reduced the notification of the miraculous act, so that the story focuses on the responses of the witnesses. It is the first time that the gospel attests the crowds being amazed at Jesus and assigning his miracle to an event unique in all Israel.

Certainly, Matthew emphasized the importance of faith in the two separate pericopae that he repositions in this cluster (Matt 9:18-26 and Matt 9:27-31). Third pericope stands apart then, bringing attention rather to the final response to Jesus.

This recognition means that the application of “faith” as the controlling theme in the third cluster of miracles does not hold and the function of 9:18-34 as a whole requires re-examination.

Newly Suggested Theme: the Spread of Jesus’ News

One commonly neglected theme common to those miracle stories of the third cluster is how Matthew has people coming to know about Jesus. a) of the two miracles of the Healing of the Woman and the Raising of the Official’s daughter (Matt 9:26), b) of the Healing of the Two Blind Men (Matt 9:30b-31), and c) of the Exorcism of the Demon (Matt 9:33c-34).

Notice how Matthew inserts these comments where his sources do not.

¹⁴ Among them are Thompson, “Reflections on Mt 8-9, 385-388; Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 50; Patte, *Matthew*, 134; Nolland, *Matthew*, 402-4; Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 8-18, 138-141.

(a) The Conclusion of the Raising of the Synagogue Official's Daughter:

Mk 5:43 καὶ διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς πολλὰ ἵνα μηδεὶς γνοῖ τοῦτο· καὶ εἶπεν δοθῆναι αὐτῇ φαγεῖν (And he strictly ordered them that no one should know this [the raising of the girl], and told them to give her something to eat).

Matt 9:26 καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἡ φήμη αὕτη εἰς ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἐκείνην (**And the report of this [the raising of the girl] spread throughout that district).**

(b) The Conclusion of the Healing of the Two Blind Men:

Mk 10:52 καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ὕπαγέ ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε καὶ εὐθὺς ἀνέβλεψεν καὶ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ (And Jesus said to him, “Go, your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way”).

Matt 9:30-31 καὶ ἠεώξθησαν αὐτῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί· καὶ ἐνεβριμήθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Ὁρᾶτε μηδεὶς γινωσκέτω. οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες διεφήμισαν αὐτὸν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γῇ ἐκείνῃ (And their eyes were opened . Then Jesus sternly ordered them, “See that no one knows of this.” **But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district).**

(c) The Conclusion of the Exorcism of the Demon .

Q 11:14 Καὶ ἐξέβαλεν δαιμόνιον κωφόν· καὶ ἐκβληθέντος τοῦ δαιμονίου ὁ κωφὸς καὶ ἐθαύμασεν οἱ ὄχλοι¹⁵ τινὲς δὲ εἶπον· ἐν Βεελζεβούλ τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (And he cast out a demon which made a person mute. And once the demon was cast out, the mute person spoke. And the crowds were amazed.¹⁵ But some said: By Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, he casts out demons!).

Matt 9:33-34: καὶ ἐκβληθέντος τοῦ δαιμονίου ἐλάλησεν ὁ κωφός καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες· οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ· οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον, Ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια. (And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; **and the crowds were amazed and said, “Never has anything like this been seen in Israel.” But the Pharisees said, “By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons”**).

What is outstanding in the Matthean redaction here is that he is bent on conveying to his audience that Jesus' reputation was growing. This is significant because earlier

¹⁵ Reconstruction of Q text and trans, Robinson, Kloppenborg, *Critical Edition of Q*, 222-224.

than this cluster, Matthew does not use any such expression as ‘the spread of the news about Jesus,’ even though his source Mark certainly does. Matthew removes it from Mk 1:45, where the leper goes out and tells everyone of his healing, and he removes it from Mk 5:20, following the account of the Gerasene demoniac.

This editing shows that for Matthew, the statement about Jesus’ fame spreading has its own strategic place in the gospel continuum. Thus, it is a sign of Matthew’s deliberate intention that he does not mention news of Jesus’ deeds spreading in the first two clusters of miracle stories, but does in each of the three pericopae of the third cluster.

In the first couple of miracle stories that are intertwined, notice how Matthew completely alters Jesus’ prohibition in the Markan text (5:43)¹⁶ into the report of the spread of the news about Jesus (Mt 9:26).

Mk 5:43 καὶ διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς πολλὰ ἵνα μηδεὶς γνοῖ τοῦτο, καὶ εἶπεν δοθῆναι αὐτῇ φαγεῖν (He strictly ordered them that on one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat).

Mt 9:26 καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἡ φήμη αὕτη εἰς ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἐκείνην (**And the report of this spread throughout that district**).

Certainly, this can be explained as an example of Matthew’s resistance to Mark’s ‘messianic secret’ theme. Since Matthew connects Jesus to the Isaiah prophecies of the Healing Messiah (Isa 53:4) and since Jesus is shown to be Son of God, and the Son of Man on earth in the second cluster, Matthew may now move on to show his audience how that identity began to be known and have its effect on people. It is in this way that Matthew is using the miracle stories of Matthew 8-9 to foster that understanding.

In the Healing of the two blind men, Matthew moves away from Mark’s

¹⁶ The text does not say if the order of the prohibition was kept or broken.

conclusion where the grateful Bartimaeus, now seeing where Jesus goes, follows him “on the road,” a significant comment in the context of the Markan gospel. Later, in Matthew’s own use of that account in Matt 20:34 that will be copied into his gospel.

Mk 10:52 καὶ εὐθὺς ἀνέβλεψεν καὶ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ
(Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way).

Mt 20:34 καὶ εὐθέως ἀνέβλεψαν καὶ ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ (Immediately they regained their sight and followed him).

Mt 9:30b-31 καὶ ἐνεβριμήθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Ὁρᾶτε μηδεὶς γινωσκέτω. οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες διεφήμισαν αὐτὸν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γῇ ἐκείνῃ
(Then Jesus sternly ordered them, “See that no one knows of this.” But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district).

In Matthew 9:30b-31, however, Matthew uses the Markan account in a new context. In this version the men do not follow Jesus but go out, and spread the news about Jesus disobeying him. The narrative element of Jesus forbidding the spread of the news of the miracle and the disobedience of the recipients seems to be depending on Mark’s story of the leper (Mk 1:43, 45). Matthew did not use it when he drew on this miracle story as his first in the first cluster. He has saved it until the last set of miracle stories in the three cluster arrangement.

The third story has already been discussed in detail above due to the argument over its major theme and even its qualification as a miracle story. We have noted that Matthew has shifted the attention there to the acclamation of Jesus by the crowds, and then the contrasting evil interpretation of the Pharisees. As we have noted, Matt 9:32-34 is a doublet, and v. 34 really acts as a portent. The Pharisees will soon attack again in Matt 12:24-32, but this time they will receive Jesus’ full counter-attack and warning with texts derived from Q and Mark.

Let us present the Matthean text in which the charge of the Pharisees is seen in Matthew's doublets, and where they depend on Q.

Q 11:14b-15 καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι. ¹⁵τινὲς δὲ εἶπον· ἐν Βεελζεβοὺλ τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (And the crowds were amazed. But some said: By Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, he casts out demons!).

Mt 12:23-24 καὶ ἐξίσταντο πάντες οἱ ὄχλοι καὶ ἔλεγον, Μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυίδ; οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες εἶπον, Οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβοὺλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων (All the crowds were amazed and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" but when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons").

Mt 9:33b-34 καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες, Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον, Ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (And the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons").

The Pharisees receive no response in v. 34. Rather Matthew will by pass them and the portent they give, to offer a summary statement to attest Jesus preaching and healing, "curing every disease and every sickness" in v. 35.

The conclusion with the Pharisee's response signals a coming open conflict between the religious authorities and Jesus. This negative response to Jesus singularity in all Israel, as a person of great authority over the evil forces that leave the people 'mute', holds important significance. Later, as we note, Matthew will introduce the Pharisees' accusation that Jesus' power is from Beelzebul (Mt 12:23-24) with Jesus' counter challenge. Here it suffices to prepare the listener for the outrageous way in which the authorities will view Jesus' amazing spiritual authority and power.

Conclusion

In the first two clusters of miracle stories, the absence of any statement concerning the spread of news about Jesus makes the repetition of that point stand out here. Thus, by the end of the miracle clusters, Jesus identity has been shown, opened up gradually, and the evangelist then records the positive reaction of the crowds in their amazement that never has anything like this been seen in Israel. Yet these signs of Messiahship and Lordship can be and will be twisted into a negative interpretation by the authorities as the gospel proceeds.

Now it is time for Jesus' identity to spread to Israel as he continues his ministry in Galilee. Here we can observe a progressive development of the story: Matthew wants to emphasize the spread of Jesus' news throughout the region after demonstrating the authority of Jesus over all diseases, nature, demons, and over human sins. The news about Jesus is rapidly spreading all over the region, and more and more crowds have heard about Jesus' miracles. Here we can confirm that the author is extraordinarily emphasizing the spread of the news about Jesus in the third cluster.

The First Stage: The Official's Dead Daughter and the Woman with a Hemorrhage
(Mt 9:18-26// Mk 5:21-43)

Introduction

As our examination will show, these two miracle stories intertwined in Mark, receive what France calls, "one of Matthew's most spectacular abbreviations",¹⁷ in order to create not only a greater example of faith in both cases. Due to the buildup of Jesus' identity throughout the gospel, the presentation of these miracles stories illustrate Jesus' divinity and his authority even over death.

¹⁷ France, *Matthew*, 170.

Jesus' Encounter of the Official

Mk 5:21-24 ²¹Καὶ διαπεράσαντος τοῦ Ἰησοῦ [ἐν τῷ πλοίῳ] πάλιν εἰς τὸ πέραν συνήχθη ὄχλος πολὺς ἐπ' αὐτόν, καὶ ἦν παρὰ τὴν θάλασσαν. ²²καὶ ἔρχεται εἰς τῶν ἀρχισυναγῶγων, ὀνόματι Ἰαῖρος, καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὸν πίπτει πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ²³καὶ παρακαλεῖ αὐτὸν πολλὰ λέγων ὅτι Τὸ θυγάτριόν μου ἐσχάτως ἔχει, ἵνα ἐλθὼν ἐπιθῇς τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῇ ἵνα σωθῇ καὶ ζήσῃ. ²⁴καὶ ἀπῆλθεν μετ' αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς καὶ συνέθλιβον αὐτόν. (²¹When Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him; and he was by the sea. ²²Then one of the leaders of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet ²³and begged him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live." ²⁴So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him.)

Mt 9:18-19 ¹⁸Ταῦτα αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος αὐτοῖς, ἰδοὺ ἄρχων εἰς ἐλθὼν προσεκύνει αὐτῷ λέγων ὅτι Ἡ θυγάτηρ μου ἄρτι ἐτελεύτησεν· ἀλλὰ ἐλθὼν ἐπίθες τὴν χεῖρά σου ἐπ' αὐτήν, καὶ ζήσεται ¹⁹καὶ ἐγερθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ (¹⁸While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." ¹⁹And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples.)

Verse 18: The Official's Request

Matthew's positioning of these first two miracle stories in his gospel changes the context in which they are introduced. In Mark, Jesus has just arrived from his exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac and a large crowd surrounds him there by the edge of the Sea of Galilee. In Matthew, it is not clear in which dwelling Jesus is seated but he is explaining to the disciples of John the Baptist why he does not teach his own disciples to pray, when a leader enters. There is no crowd. There is calm and a special privacy to the Matthean account which distinguishes it from the noisiness of Mark's context. We notice that there is a desperation in the Markan account which fits the upset of the father. He falls at Jesus' feet, and is begging him repeatedly to come to forestall his daughter's death by placing his hand on her. Thus a sense of urgency is conveyed in the Markan text, and a tension is introduced which will increase later as the woman with the

hemorrhage intervenes with her own needs for healing. Then, the worst will be reported to the father as someone reports that the girl has died. Jesus will be the one to urge the father “Do not fear, only believe.” At this point, the story which appeared to be a healing miracle now moves to be the account of a raising from the dead.

Matthew has made a dramatic and profound alteration in the story which cannot be minimized. In his version, the father knows that his daughter has died. Given this situation, the father of the Markan story would not even have approached Jesus, as seen in the messenger’s hard hearted message “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?” (Mk 5:35).

Matthew’s father shows that he is convinced that Jesus can raise his daughter. Notice how Matthew has changed the statement of the father’s expectations in Mark, from the subjunctive, “so she may live” (ἵνα σωθῇ καὶ ζήσῃ, Mk 5:23) to the confident future, “And she will live” (καὶ ζήσεται, Matt 9:9).¹⁸

We cannot argue that stories of hero’s raising the dead are common to the world of Greco-Roman antiquity. “Healers” were common enough. In that category, Jesus joins many heroes and holy men who were assigned miracles of physical healing but stories of a hero raising anyone from the dead are not extant, except for the legends of Empedocles. The man-god Asclepius raised the dead. The Jewish heroes Elijah and Elisha could be said to affect God’s raising a dead boy through their fervent prayers.¹⁹ How is it then that it would occur to this leader to ask Jesus for such a miracle? How is it

¹⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 127; Theissen, *Miracle Stories*, 54f; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 248.

¹⁹ Cotter, *The Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, 24-25, 39, 48-49, 52-53.

that he thinks that Jesus need only lay his hand upon her?

There is no question that Matthew illustrates an astounding faith in the father. At the same time, he invites his audience to ask why this extraordinary expectation would come to this father: Why did he think that Jesus could bring his daughter back from the dead? Clearly the father has heard something about Jesus. Matthew has led his audience to the point where they feel completely confident in Jesus as well, for by means of his clustering of the miracle stories, each with their own assertion of Jesus' true identity, it is clear that Jesus is the divine Son of God. The father kneeling before Jesus to make this request is an affirmation that in his eyes, Jesus has received a divine empowerment that can even raise his daughter from the dead.

In this way, Matthew's alteration of the father's plea from one that requests healing to one that asks for the raising of his daughter from the dead is key to a development in Matthew's thrust forward of the miracle stories. Here the request of the father affirms a public recognition of Jesus' divine empowerment, which for the audience of the gospel, fits well with his revelation as the divine being.

Verse 19: Jesus' Response

Mk 5:24 καὶ ἀπῆλθεν μετ' αὐτοῦ. Καὶ ἠκολούθει αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς καὶ συνέθλιβον αὐτόν (So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him).

Mt 9:19 καὶ ἐγερθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ (And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples).

In both accounts Jesus' response is immediate. The main difference is that Matthew's Jesus is no longer surrounded by that huge crowd. Gundry notes how Matthew's care to avoid any crowd "belongs to Matthew's program of concentrating

attention on Jesus.”²⁰ Typical of Matthew’s important theme of discipleship, he adds that the disciples are with Jesus.

This mention of the disciples with Jesus, as the sole companions as he goes with the leader of the synagogue deserves attention because unlike the Markan account where Jesus’ disciples have a role in the story of the woman with the hemorrhage, and then again in the story of the raising of the girl, they will have no further role at all in either story that follows in Matthew’s redaction. Jesus will be the sole focus. He mentions them, we suggest, because the significance of discipleship has been a constant theme intertwining these miracle clusters. As we recall, the topic of discipleship marks the first intervening pericopae with the cost of homelessness, while the topic of discipleship again occurs in the second intervening pericopae with the subject of Jesus’ unconventional discipleship choices and training of disciples. It is no accident that following the last set of miracle stories, Matthew will position the Great Mission Speech, naming his apostles for this mandate.

The Cure of the Woman with the Hemorrhage

The woman’s touch of Jesus

Mk 5:25-28 ²⁵καὶ γυνὴ οὖσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος δώδεκα ἔτη ²⁶καὶ πολλὰ παθοῦσα ὑπὸ πολλῶν ἰατρῶν καὶ δαπανήσασα τὰ παρ’ αὐτῆς πάντα καὶ μηδὲν ὠφεληθεῖσα ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον εἰς τὸ χεῖρον ἐλθοῦσα, ²⁷ἀκούσασα περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἐλθοῦσα ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ὀπισθεν ἥψατο τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ. ²⁸ἔλεγεν γὰρ ὅτι Ἐὰν ἅψωμαι κἂν τῶν ἱματίων αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι. (²⁵Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years. ²⁶She had endured much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had; and she was no better, but rather grew worse. ²⁷She had heard about Jesus, and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, ²⁸for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well." [literally, "I shall be saved"]”).

Mt 9:20-21 ²⁰Καὶ ἰδοὺ γυνὴ αἰμορροοῦσα δώδεκα ἔτη προσελθοῦσα ὀπισθεν ἥψατο τοῦ

²⁰ Gundry, Matthew, 173.

κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ ²¹ἔλεγεν γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτῇ, Ἐὰν μόνον ἅψωμαι τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι (²⁰Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, ²¹for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well (Literally, "I shall be saved")."

Matthew follows the ‘sandwiching’ of the woman’s cure between the request of the father and the actual raising of his dead daughter. Again, he has changed the context of the story in that there is no crowd pushing and pressing in upon Jesus as in the Markan text. The idea is that Jesus and his disciples are walking with the father, when the woman comes up behind Jesus and touches the fringe of his cloak. Matthew has also cut away whatever he would see as distracting from the focus on Jesus’ miracle, as he did in the case of the Healing of the Paralytic. He excises the larger description of the woman’s sufferings and likewise the redundant explanation that ‘she had heard about Jesus’ (Mk 5:27a). By doing so, he loses something of the drama of the woman’s healing. He also cuts away excuses that would cause the audience to forgive her for what appears to be the pre-Markan awareness that she disregards purity codes in touching someone while enduring a flow of blood, i.e. being unclean,²¹ and for her disregard of cultural laws about womanly modesty. Matthew seems to find sufficient details for the audience’s compassion in the report of her suffering for twelve years, which assumes unsuccessful medical treatments. Matthew’s addition of the ‘fringe’ of the cloak shows her effort to respect the purity codes as much as possible by touching only these little threads that hang from the back of the garment, and not to make direct contact with Jesus’ person.

²¹ Many scholars support the ritual uncleanness of the woman based upon Lev 15:19-33 Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 248; Carson, *Matthew*, 230; Gundry, *Matthew*, 173; Morris, *Matthew*, 229; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 42; C. S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Double Day, 1986), 286; R. A. Guelich, *Mark 1-8:26* (Dallas: Word Book, 1989), 297; B. Witherington, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study of Jesus’ Attitudes to Women and Their Roles as Reflected in his Earthly Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 73; R.R. Ruether, *New Woman New Earth* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1975), 65.

The woman is modest in trying to be ‘invisible’ by coming up behind Jesus.²² We must note here that Amy-Jill Levine sees modesty as the only issue, dismissing any interpretation that the woman knows she is “unclean” as she states, “The Gospel of Matthew is explicit neither on how the Law is (to be) practiced nor on how the Matthean community views women.”²³ This is a difficult statement to support for this evangelist has given his redaction of the Sermon on the Mount, with its almost rabbinic applications of Torah and the insertions on prayer, almsgiving and fasting. More importantly Matthew’s special insertion, Matthew 23: 2-3ab, has Jesus assert ‘the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat; therefore do whatever they teach’. Levine is correct that Matthew does not specify how his community views women, but the demands that unless Matthew spells it out, it cannot be assumed that the flow of blood in women or anyone had any laws governing social contact seems to strain credulity. It seems far more plausible that the pre-Markan audience (probably NOT the Markan audience) and the Matthean audience knew very well that the woman made a decision to risk passing uncleanness to Jesus by even an indirect contact with him.²⁴

Verse 21 explains why the woman in hemorrhage touched the fringe of Jesus’ cloak. Here Matthew faithfully follows Mark, but he makes a little change to make clear his point.

²² “In Mark, the woman’s approach from behind Jesus is occasioned by the crowd’s surrounding him; in the briefer version of Matthew, the shyness of the woman, who dares do no more than touch the tassel from behind” (Schweizer, *Matthew*, 229).

²³ Amy-Jill Levine, “Discharging Responsibility: Matthean Jesus, Biblical Law and Hemorrhaging Woman,” in *Treasures New and Old: Recent Contributions to Matthean Studies* (eds. David R. Bauer and Mark A. Powell; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996) 379-97, here 379.

²⁴ See the full discussion of Levine, “Discharging Responsibility,” 379-97.

Mk 5:28 ἔλεγεν γὰρ ὅτι Ἐὰν ἅψωμαι καὶ τῶν ἱματίων αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι (for she said, "If I but touch his clothes, I will be made well").

Mt 9:21 ἔλεγεν γὰρ ἐν ἑαυτῇ, Ἐὰν μόνον ἅψωμαι τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ σωθήσομαι (for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well").

Matthew adds a clarification and an intensification. He first stipulates that the woman's statement of conviction was something she thought (ἐν ἑαυτῇ), what the Markan text intends. Second, Matthew emphasizes the woman's faith by μόνον, bringing out that his twelve year suffering would come to an end with even the touch of the cloak Jesus was wearing, avoiding his person.²⁵ Again the faith of the woman also heightens an attestation of her belief in Jesus' holiness.

Jesus' healing of the hemorrhaging woman

Mk 5:34 ³⁴ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Θυγάτηρ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε· ὑπάγε εἰς εἰρήνην καὶ ἴσθι ὑγιὴς ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου. (³⁴He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.")

Mt 9:22 ²²ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς στραφείς καὶ ἰδὼν αὐτὴν εἶπεν, Θάρσει, θύγατερ· ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε. καὶ ἐσώθη ἡ γυνὴ ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης (Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well. And instantly the woman was made well" [Literally, "and the woman was saved from that hour"].)

This verse is the climax and conclusion of this particular miracle story.²⁶ Here Matthew has altered the account to give Jesus the complete authority in the pronouncement of healing, which Matthew has changed to "saving". The Markan elements in Mk 5:29-33 such as power going out of Jesus which dry up the hemorrhaging, the scene of Jesus' not knowing who has received that power, and the

²⁵ Morris, *Matthew*, 229.

²⁶ The structure of this story is bipolar without a prelude (i.e., an introduction): the woman's touch of Jesus' cloak and Jesus' response.

reproof of the disciples, is totally excised. The rather ‘magical’ idea of power flowing from Jesus automatically makes Jesus look subject to it and ignorant of its object. In Matthew, it is Jesus who is in command. He turns to see the woman. Does Matthew suggest that Jesus knew she was there?

In the Matthean version there is no need for the woman to explain herself as in Mark (Mk 5:33). Jesus seems to know instantly what she needed and what faith she had in resorting only to the small threads at the back of his cloak. Thus, when Jesus speaks to her, it is not as in Mark, a reply to her story. Instead he utters a compassionate and reassuring response, “Take heart, Daughter”. This encouraging word, “Θάρσει” is found three times in Matthew’s gospel. The one use he shares with Mark is in the Walking on the Water, when he calls to the frightened disciples who scream, thinking they are seeing a ghost (Mk 6:50//Matt 14:27). Matthew uses the encouragement twice on his own, as inserts into Markan sources. First, as we have seen in our discussion of the Paralytic, when he is brought to Jesus by his friends (Matt 9:2), and then here, when this woman who has suffered for twelve years has approached Jesus by herself with her affliction. In these insertions, Matthew shows that Jesus’ first response is not just a word of power, but a sign of his compassion. Then, in addressing the woman as “daughter,” Matthew follows the tradition and in so doing retains the link between two stories about “daughters”.

Matthew’s conclusion shows the importance the verb “σωζειν” has for him. He follows the traditional expression of the woman’s confidence, “If I but touch his cloak, I will be saved” (Mk 5:28//Matt 9:21). Then in both texts, (Mk 5:34b//Matt 9:22c) Jesus

will use precisely that verb to describe her rescue from her disease: ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε (“your faith has saved you”). But the Markan ending shows that a clarification of the saying has been appended, ὑπάγε εἰς εἰρήνην καὶ ἴσθι ὑγιὴς ἀπὸ τῆς μάστιγός σου (“Go in peace and be healed of your disease”). Matthew has excised that ending. He maintains the verb σωζεῖν as he provides the conclusion: καὶ ἐσώθη ἡ γυνὴ ἀπὸ τῆς ὥρας ἐκείνης (And she was saved from that hour).

Matthew underlines Jesus’ role as savior, as we see from the prophecy at his infancy (Matt 1:21) saving people from their sins, and changing the cries of Mark’s disciples in the storm from a rebuke to the pious cry “Lord, Save!” (Matt 8:25). Again in his insertion onto the Markan story of the Walking on the Sea, he will have Peter cry out as he sinks into the sea, “Lord, Save!” (Matt 14:30). Here then he repeats the verb to bring home the real meaning of Jesus’ miracle for the woman and inviting the audience to be encouraged to understand him as Savior.

Before leaving this story, the scholarly question of when Matthew and Mark understand the woman to be “saved” from her malady has been raised. Mark’s ending creates its own difficulty when Jesus tells the woman, “Go in peace and be healed of your disease.” According to his tradition, the moment the woman touched Jesus’ cloak she felt the hemorrhage dry up in her, and knew she was healed. Yet Matthew’s own conclusion is not without difficulty. If the woman must wait until the pronouncement of Jesus, then was she wrong that all she needed to do was to touch his garment? With the Matthean pronouncement that she was “saved” from that hour, it leads one to conclude that when she touched his garment, healing did not take place. Davies and Allison seem to

represent Matthew's intent well when they suggest that the evangelist wants the healing to be dependent on the word of Jesus. Jesus is telling her that it was her faith (and not an external touch) that is responsible for the healing she will now experience.

Lest his readers may misunderstand what has transpired, Matthew plainly indicates that it was not the woman's grasp which effected her cure but faith: 'your faith has saved you.' The point is driven home by the next clause, in which 'from that hour' refers not to the woman's action but to Jesus' words. In short, 'everything is at the conscious, personal level. Jesus perceives what the woman wants and what she believes, and he heals her consciously.'²⁷

As Bromley notes, to the woman "clothing is an extension of and carries with it a person's power and authority."²⁸ Hull's work agrees that Matthew wants to emphasize the authority of Jesus' word.²⁹ These scholars certainly do underline a key Matthean theme. At the same time, Matthew himself does not make the interpretation so completely free of difficulty, since he copies Mark 6:56 (Matt 14:36) and agrees: "and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were saved." Nevertheless this actual story brings out dramatically the authority of Jesus and his compassion in a way that no summary statement could do it.

The Raising of the Daughter of the Leader Continues

The dead daughter

Mk 5:38-40a ³⁸καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ ἀρχισυναγώγου, καὶ θεωρεῖ θόρυβον καὶ κλαίοντας καὶ ἀλαλάζοντας πολλά, ³⁹καὶ εἰσελθὼν λέγει αὐτοῖς, Τί θορυβεῖσθε καὶ κλαίετε; τὸ παιδίον οὐκ ἀπέθανεν ἀλλὰ καθεύδει. ^{40α}καὶ κατεγέλων αὐτοῦ. (³⁸When they came to the house of the leader of the synagogue, he saw a commotion, people weeping

²⁷ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 130.

²⁸ Bromley, "The Healing of the Hemorrhaging Woman: Miracle or Magic?" 14.

²⁹ John M. Hull, *Hellenistic Magic and the Synoptic Tradition*, vol. 28 *Studies in Biblical Theology*; Second Series (Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1974), 136.

and wailing loudly. ³⁹When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." ^{40a}And they laughed at him.)

Mt 9:23-24 ²³Καὶ ἐλθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἄρχοντος καὶ ἰδὼν τοὺς αὐλητὰς καὶ τὸν ὄχλον θορυβούμενον ²⁴ἔλεγεν, Ἀναχωρεῖτε, οὐ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν τὸ κοράσιον ἀλλὰ καθεύδει. καὶ κατεγέλων αὐτοῦ (²³When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, ²⁴he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him).

Now Matthew continues with Mark's resumption of the journey to the leader's home. As we have noted, the context is rather different. In the Markan story, the girl has so recently died that the father receives word of it just as Jesus has healed the woman. Given that immediacy, an audience listening to the Markan version might well agree that when Jesus tells the noisy mourners that the girl is only sleeping, he may be exercising his special knowledge that the girl is only in a coma. While this is not the intent of the Markan story, such conclusions already existed as proven by a story of the doctor Asclepiades supposedly raising a new bride from death. ³⁰ Celsus the doctor comments, "It should not be ignored, however that it is in rather acute diseases that signs, whether the recovery of recovery or of death, may be fallacious". ³¹ Indeed, Apuleius claims that what appeared to be Asclepiades' raising a corpse to life, was actually his skill in bringing back the life that lay "in the secret places of the body". ³² In other words, he was an extraordinary healer. Any doubt about the death of the girl has already been removed in Matt 9:18, where the father tells Jesus that she has died.

Verse 23. Matthew's addition of the flute players also affirms that the time of

³⁰ Celsus, *On Medicine* (3 vols; trans. W. G. Spencer; London: Heinemann, 1935), 1. 2.6.16- 18.

³¹ Ibid., 18. Reference owed to Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity* , 46.

³² Apuleius, *Florida , Apologia and Florida* (trans. H. E. Butler; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1909), 19. Reference owed to Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, 46-47.

death as been long enough to prepare for official mourning, since he mentions the flute players. According to *m. Ketuboth* 4.4, even the poorest people were required to hire at least two flute players and one wailing woman to perform the funeral services.³³ Josephus also attests the practice in that when it was reported that in his army in Galilee many soldiers had committed suicide to escape slaughter by the Roman army, those in Jerusalem mourned for their slain kindred, friends, brethren: “insomuch that the lamentation did not cease in the city before thirtieth day; and a great many hired mourners, with their pipes, who should begin the melancholy ditties for them.”³⁴ Mark’s story with the crowd making a commotion is fitting given the fact that Jairus is leader of the synagogue. So too in Matthew, the statement of the large crowd of mourners “making a commotion (θορυβούμενον)” is retained. But he has removed the description of the people weeping and wailing. Perhaps he sees it as redundant. Another very possible reason is to eliminate a pathetic view of the people who would be understood by Matthew’s audience as truly loving the girl, and grieving her loss. In the Markan version, Jesus then could be seen to be hardhearted when he asks them “Why do you make a commotion and weep?”

Verse 24. With the removal of the emotionally laden details of people weeping and wailing, only the report of the scene as noisy remains. Matthew has Jesus authoritatively order these mourners away: “Αναχωρεῖτε.” Then he follows Mark’s text, οὐ γὰρ ἀπέθανεν τὸ κοράσιον ἀλλὰ καθεύδει. He has, however, substituted τὸ κοράσιον

³³ *Ketuboth* 4.4 says, “R. Judah says: Even the poorest in Israel should hire not less than two flutes and one wailing woman.” See Danby, *Mishnah*, 250.

³⁴ *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged* (trans. by William Whiston; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987), Book 3 Chapter 9 Section 5 (437).

for Mark's τὸ παιδίον. In fact, in the translation of Ταλιθα κουμ, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον τὸ κοράσιον, σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε Mark has indicated that the 'child' is a young girl. Matthew excises the mention of the girl being twelve years old in Mk 4: 42b which, placed after the announcement of her miraculous return to life, is not critical to the grandeur of the miracle.

Of course the mocking laughter of the people emphasizes the degree to which the tragic death of the girl is only too plain. At the same time, the traditional story is attesting the modesty of Jesus, who does not make a show of the amazing power that will be revealed when he is alone with the deceased, and raises her to life.

Jesus' raising of the dead daughter

Mk 5:40b-43 ^{40b} αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκβαλὼν πάντας παραλαμβάνει τὸν πατέρα τοῦ παιδίου καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ τοὺς μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰσπορεύεται ὅπου ἦν τὸ παιδίον. ⁴¹καὶ κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ παιδίου λέγει αὐτῇ, Ταλιθα κουμ, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον τὸ κοράσιον, σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε. ⁴²καὶ εὐθὺς ἀνέστη τὸ κοράσιον καὶ περιεπάτει· ἦν γὰρ ἐτῶν δώδεκα. καὶ ἐξέστησαν [εὐθὺς] ἐκστάσει μεγάλῃ. ⁴³καὶ διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς πολλὰ ἵνα μηδεὶς γνοῖ τοῦτο, καὶ εἶπεν δοθῆναι αὐτῇ φαγεῖν. (^{40b}Then he put them all outside, and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha cum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" ⁴²And immediately the girl got up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. ⁴³He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat.)

Mt 9:25-26 ²⁵ὅτε δὲ ἐξεβλήθη ὁ ὄχλος εἰσελθὼν ἐκράτησεν τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ ἠγέρθη τὸ κοράσιον ²⁶καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἡ φήμη αὕτη εἰς ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἐκείνην (²⁵But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. ²⁶And the report of this spread throughout that district).

Verse 25. Matthew's version is distinct in a number of ways. First, there has been no mention of his disciples with him, as there is in Mark. The story invites the listener to focus on Jesus alone. Also, where the girl is lying is different in Matthew. In Mark, Jesus is already in the house with the mourners when he puts them all outside. So

when the text says that “he took the parents and those with him and went in to where the child was,” the girl who has recently died appears to be in an adjacent room. In Matthew, Jesus has not yet entered into the house. It is when he reaches the house that he ordered the mourners to leave, and when they were sent from the house, it is then that Jesus entered the house and is immediately in the presence of the deceased girl. This scene shows that she has already been laid out and is there where anyone entering can see her and mourn. This is another way that Matthew makes it clear that the girl is dead.

Because Jesus is now in the main room of the house where the girl is laid out, there is no need for him to create a private scene in the bedroom with only the parents and his disciples. That distraction is not at all necessary. The audience can imagine Jesus now inside the house and immediately close to the corpse of the dead girl. In fact, one receives the impression that it required one fluid motion for Jesus to enter and take the girl’s hand. With this description, Matthew avoids anything that could take attention away from Jesus.

There is no word of command to the corpse, as in Mark. If he has a mixed audience with Gentile converts, does he fear that the Aramaic or even the Greek command is open to interpretations of magic? ”³⁵

In the stories of the raising of the dead child by Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-24) and Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-37) the only words spoken are those by Elijah in prayer to the Lord. In both stories the prophets make physical contact with the child, lying on the child’s body. This is a kind of physical prayer, with the prophet being a conduit used by the Lord.

³⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 133.

Matthew removes any speech at all, and he follows the Markan tradition that Jesus simply takes the dead girl's hand in his own. He quietly and in dignified fashion, states that the girl rose. In the Markan text, Jesus' command uses the verb ἐγείρω for 'rise'. Then when Mark reports the girl doing so, he switches to ἀνίσταμι. It is puzzling why he did so. On the one hand we could suggest that the girl's rising up from the dead, expressed with ἀνίσταμι, may be meant as a symbolism of Jesus' coming resurrection, for he uses that verb in the three passion predictions (Mk 8:, 31; 9:31; 10:34). The problem is that the actual announcement of the young man in the tomb in Mk 16:6, uses ἐγείρω. Other examples of people getting up, such as the story of the Paralytic (Mk 2:9, 11, 12) use ἐγείρω. Actually, it appears that Mark really does not have a special significance attached to the verbe since in the account of Jesus' agony in the garden, Mark uses ἐγείρω in Jesus reference to when he is raised (Mk 14:28), and then when he orders the sleeping disciple to stand up (Mk 14:42).

The same cannot be said of Matthew. His use of ἀνίσταμι intransitively (6x) is quite limited as compared to Mark (17x). Matthew alters Mark's text of the three passion predictions so that all three use ἀνίσταμι. It is the verb used consistently for the Easter proclamation to the women (28:6-7). Here Matthew is copying the verb used by Mark in Mk 16:6. But then used in his own material for the references to Jesus predicting his being raised in the story of the reason for guards being set by the tomb (Matt 27:52,63, 64), and his special inserted reference of John being thought to be raised from the dead (Matt 14:2). In particular, it prepares for the review of the one who proves himself the fulfillment of Isaiah' prophecy as the Messiah. In the Q defense of Jesus as

the Coming one (Q 7:22) the inclusion of “raising the dead” will soon be referenced in the Mission Speech (Matt 10:8) and in the actual Q pericope (Matt 11:5//Q 7:22).

Thus, in Mk 5:41 when Jesus gives the command for the girl to rise τὸ κοράσιον, σοὶ λέγω, ἔγειρε, he used this verb alone in his own affirmation of her return to life, a verb that will be the one always used by Jesus in his promises that he will rise, and in the proclamation of the angel descending from heaven in Matt 28:6-7. The image of the girl rising is a kind of symbol of the coming resurrection of all Christians.

Verse 26. Matthew’s emphasis on Jesus’ authority of raising the dead daughter naturally links to the spread of the news. He has excised all the secondary features in Mark: a) that the girl began to walking around; b) she was twelve; c) the amazement of the people in the room [disciples and parents, supposedly]; and d) Jesus’ counsel to give the girl something to eat. For Matthew all this clutters the flabberghasting character of Jesus bringing back the girl from death. He leaves it there, probably so that the audience can absorb its significance.

Mt 9:26 καὶ ἐξηλθεν ἡ φήμη αὕτη εἰς ὅλην τὴν γῆν ἐκεῖνην
(And the report of this spread throughout that district).

This new addition of Matthew is important in understanding the intention of Matthew in the first story of the third cluster, as Nolland says, “Matthew wanted to keep this note for the final triad of miracles (here and in 9:31).”³⁶ While Matthew continues to keep emphasizing Jesus’ authority rather than the recipients, this time he adds a new theme: the spread of Jesus’ fame.

³⁶ Nolland, *Matthew*, 398. Mt 9:33-34 can be understood also from the viewpoint of the spread of the news. The spread of the news does not always bring positive responses but sometimes negative responses like that of the Pharisees. This will be explained later in detail.

The statement is part of the entire narrative thread of Matthew 8-9. At the end of Mt 8-9 the statements about the effect of Jesus' miracles among the people are multiplied. Jesus' activity includes his entire nation. This prepares the way for the mission of the disciples in chp 10 and it gives Jesus' rejection by the scribes, Pharisees, and the disciples of John its appropriate dimension.³⁷

Clearly the theme of the spread of Jesus' news concludes the miracle stories of Matthew 8-9.³⁸ Now Jesus' miracle ministry as the Messiah in Isa 53:4 and the Son of God is known to the entire region, and is preparing the great mission of the disciples in chapter 10. This theme brackets the idea of Mt 4:24: "καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ἡ ἀκοὴ αὐτοῦ εἰς ὅλην τὴν Συρίαν" (So his fame spread throughout all Syria).³⁹ Now Jesus' teaching and healing ministry is spreading all over the region.

Conclusion of the First Miracle Story

In this first transferred pericope, the intertwined miracles of the Raising of the Synagogue leader's daughter and the Woman with the Hemorrhage, Matthew has brought out Jesus as 'saviour.' He saves the woman, and he saves the girl. In the first miraculous act, Jesus shows the power of his authoritative word, together with his compassionate concern for the suffering woman. The second miracle is the climax of the two, where the faith-filled father has his astonishing petition, his amazing faith in Jesus, answered in one swift movement of Jesus to enter the house and take the dead girl's lifeless hand. The breathtaking power over death, the most feared of any consequence, is shown by Jesus. Unlike the prophets Elijah and Elisha he does not have to pray, or make

³⁷ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 43.

³⁸ Without 8:16-17, it would be almost impossible to catch the narrative theme of the first division. Likewise, the third division should be analyzed from a wider context.

³⁹ Nolland, *Matthew*, 398.

any elaborate physical contacts with the girl. He does not even have to give any command. Divine power, God's power is available to Jesus. With the stunning conclusion, the audience is only too aware that the fame about such a miracle would indeed spread throughout the district.

The Second Stage: Two Blind Men Healed (Matt 9:27-31//Mk 10:46-52)

²⁷Καὶ παράγοντι ἐκεῖθεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠκολούθησαν [αὐτῷ] δύο τυφλοὶ κρᾶζοντες καὶ λέγοντες, Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, υἱὸς Δαυὶδ ²⁸ἔλθοντι δὲ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν προσήλθον αὐτῷ οἱ τυφλοί, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Πιστεύετε ὅτι δύναμαι τοῦτο ποιῆσαι; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Ναὶ κύριε ²⁹τότε ἥψατο τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν λέγων, Κατὰ τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν γεινηθήτω ὑμῖν ³⁰καὶ ἠνεώχθησαν αὐτῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί. καὶ ἐνεβριμήθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Ὁρᾶτε μηδεὶς γινωσκέτω ³¹οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες διεφήμισαν αὐτὸν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γῇ ἐκεῖνῃ,

²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" ²⁸When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." ²⁹Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you." ³⁰And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this." ³¹But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district.

Introduction

In this second pericope of the cluster, Jesus will be shown to give sight to two blind men. Hagner notes that Matthew is really continuing to preparing for the Isaiah conglomerate proof texting in Q 7:22-23⁴⁰ which later in Matt 11:4-6 will cite Jesus answer to the disciples of John as to whether he is the Coming One:

Go, and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.

These miracles presented first, allow the audience to affirm that Jesus fulfills the

⁴⁰ The text combines Isaiah 29:18-19, 35:5-6; and 61:1.

Messianic hopes.⁴¹ At this point of the miracle clusters, Matthew has shown that Jesus has cured a leper, and in the second cluster, done more than allow ‘the lame’ to walk, but actually restored the paralytic. In the first pericope brought over from Mark, Jesus has raised the dead. Now all that remains to complete the fulfillment of the prophecy to be applied by Jesus to himself is giving sight to the blind, and giving hearing to the deaf.⁴²

This miracle story of the two blind men seems to be something of Matthew’s own doublet, drawing on the redaction he will apply to Mark’s Bartimaeus narrative (Matt 20:29-34 redacted from Mk 10:46-52), as Senior states, “a near carbon copy of the story in Mt 20:29-34, which in turn is inspired by Mk 10:46-52.”⁴³ Meier too observes in Mt 9:27-31 “a weak reflection of Bartimaeus’ healing in Mk 10:46-52,”⁴⁴ and “shadowy twins or doublets of more substantial miracle stories in Mk [8:22-26 and 10:46-52],” using the simpler form first and later gives a fuller form in Mt 20:29-34.⁴⁵ Davies and Allison conclude that Matthew needed a story of Jesus healing the blind, here in the cluster of miracles, chapter 8-9, before Matt 20:29-34, so that as early as Matt 11:5, Matthew shows that Jesus had already fulfilled each miracle identified as a sign of the Messiah.⁴⁶ Matthew can take liberties with the location of Markan miracle stories as we

⁴¹ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 252. See also Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 133.

⁴² Luz also agrees that “Matthew wants to give an example for each of the miracles that Jesus enumerates for the disciples of John. He has not had an appropriate story for the healing of the blind and mute, he uses these two narratives in anticipation.” See his book, *Matthew 8-20*, 39. See also Meier, *Matthew*, 98.

⁴³ Senior, *Matthew*, 109.

⁴⁴ Meier, *Matthew*, 98.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 133.

have seen. Why did he not simply move the conglomerate he created in Matt 20:29-34 to this position? It may well be that Matthew regarded the placement of this material to be importantly attached to the order of events leading to the Passion of Jesus, since the story takes place in Jericho, which Matthew retains, and immediately afterwards enters Jerusalem. For purposes of noting the differences Matthew has introduced in creating this story, we will always provide the parallels between Matthew 20:29-34 and Mk 10:46-52.

Jesus' Encounter of Two Blind Men

Mk 10:46-47 ⁴⁶Καὶ ἔρχονται εἰς Ἱεριχώ. καὶ ἐκπορευομένου αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ Ἱεριχὼ καὶ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ὄχλου ἱκανοῦ ὁ υἱὸς Τιμαίου Βαρτιμαῖος, τυφλὸς προσαίτης, ἐκάθητο παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν. ⁴⁷καὶ ἀκούσας ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζαρηνὸς ἐστὶν ἤρξατο κράζειν καὶ λέγειν, Υἱὲ Δαυὶδ Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με. (⁴⁶They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!")

Mt 20:29-30 ²⁹Καὶ ἐκπορευομένων αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Ἱεριχὼ ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ ὄχλος πολὺς. ³⁰καὶ ἰδοὺ δύο τυφλοὶ καθήμενοι παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ἰησοῦς παράγει, ἔκραξαν λέγοντες, Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, [κύριε], υἱὸς Δαυίδ. (²⁹As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!")

Mt 9:27 ²⁷Καὶ παράγοντι ἐκεῖθεν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἠκολούθησαν [αὐτῷ] δύο τυφλοὶ κρίζοντες καὶ λέγοντες, Ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, υἱὸς Δαυίδ (²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!").

Two blind men as witnesses

We should note the way in which Matthew has altered the positioning of this story. In Mark, the story of Jesus' raising Jairus' daughter is followed by Jesus' return to his hometown, and there Mark will relate the story of Jesus' rejection (Mk 6:1-6). In Matthew ("as Jesus went on from there"), Jesus moves from the house of the leader to his

itinerancy once more. It opens the way for an encounter. In this story, Matthew has two blind men following him. It is difficult to explain how Matthew supposes they knew where Jesus was. It cannot be acute hearing of his voice, because their own shouting would drown out sounds of speech and walking.

We might ask why Matthew's story, if relying on Mark 10:46-52, uses two blind men here. Some scholars propose that since Matthew has deleted the story of the Blind Man of Bethsaida (Mk 8:22-26), the second blind man in his own redaction of the Bartimaeus story (and hence this doublet) is to make sure to attribute the second miracle to Jesus.⁴⁷ Despite Carson's charge that such a theory is 'fanciful,'⁴⁸ he must also note that Matthew has also supplied two demoniacs (Matt 8:28-34) in his redaction of the one demoniac story of Mark 5:1-20, when he has excised the exorcism of the Demonized man in the Synagogue (Mk 1:22-28). There is, therefore, yet another case that can be explained easily by representation of the miracle when the narrative has been excised. Thus, when Loader comments that such an interpretation "presupposes a statistical preoccupation in redaction not evidenced elsewhere in the Gospel,"⁴⁹ he has to let go of such stringent demands for 'statistical preoccupation' since that is not Matthew's concern. Rather, this evangelist is a devout follower of Jesus, and does not wish to remove forever the Tradition's recall of a miracle he performed, and one in the same class as another less problematic in its narrative form. Luz and others have suggested

⁴⁷ Gundry, *Matthew*, 158; Keener, *Matthew*, 307; Meier, *Matthew*, 99; Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, 44-45; F. V. Filson, *A Commentary on the Gospel According to Matthew* (London: A&C Black, 1960), 123.

⁴⁸ Carson, *Matthew*, 232.

⁴⁹ Loader, "Son of David," 581.

that the presence of two blind men both healed allow the testimony of two witnesses (Deut 19:15).⁵⁰ This would fit well with the Matthean conclusion where the men now seeing, disobey Jesus and spread the news of the miracle everywhere.

Son of David in Matthew

In Mark, the title of Jesus, Son of David, is inadequate and even blind Bartimaeus who first screams this out to Jesus, drops it when he actually comes before Jesus, addressing him now as “Rabbouni” (Mk 10: 51d). For Mark, the title that is to be revealed is that Jesus is Son of God. For Matthew, this title, Son of David, is of great importance. It is found in the introduction of the gospel: “Jesus the Messiah, Son of David, Son of Abraham” (Matt 1:1). The genealogy is organized into three parts, and the first and second parts are divided by mention of David (Matt 1:6). Matthew gives to Jesus his connection to King David himself through his guardian and foster father, and to make this plain the angel addresses Joseph as “Son of David”. The first time this royal title is given to Jesus is here, in this miracle story, where the two blind men, display that uncanny knowledge of Jesus’ royal and holy lineage. This connection between the Messianic Royal title of Son of David to miraculous healings is initiated here in this story, and will appear later in the gospel. We pause here to review how that is true.

Matthew’s deliberate connection between the Son of David and healing is seen later again in his insertion of the Q account of the cure of the mute demoniac (Q 11:14//Matt 12:22) where he adds: “All the crowds were amazed and said, ‘Can this be the Son of David?’” Matthew then attaches a blend of the Markan and Q versions of the

⁵⁰ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 46; Meier, *Matthew*, 163, 172; Gibbs, “Son of David,” 457; P. Lamarche, “Le Possédé de Gêrasa (Mt 8.28-34, Mk 5.1-20, Lk 8.26-39),” in *NRT* 90 (1968), 594; Loader, “Son of David,” 582.

Beelzebul controversy (Mk 3:22 and Q 11:15) to answer so that in Matthew the Pharisees charge that by the prince of demons he casts out demons". Matthew also inserts the title into the Markan story of the Syro-Phoenician Mother (Canaanite in Matthew) who now addresses Jesus as "Lord, Son of David" (Matt 15:23). Here the addition of Lord now affirms the exalted status of Jesus. This addition to the title is also made in Matthew's own version of the Bartimaeus account in Mk 10:45-52, where the two blind men call out "Lord, Son of David" (Matt 20:30-31). The kingly reign of David promised by God in Chronicles to the people of Israel, is recalled frankly when Matthew has the crowds meet Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem with cries of "Hosanna to the Son of David". When Jesus enters the temple and banishes the sellers, he heals the blind and lame who come to him there. Right after Matthew says that, the chief priest and scribes complain that the children are crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matt 21:9). Jesus accepts the title and quotes Ps. 8:3: "Yes; have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies you have acquired praise for yourself?'" (Matt 21:16 c, d, e, f). Finally, Matthew mentions Jesus as Son of David when he copies the Markan question concerning the relation of the Messiah to the Son of David in Matt 22:41-45//Mk 12:35-3. The authorities answer Jesus that the Messiah is the Son of David. Then Jesus quotes Psalm 110 and asks, "If David calls him 'Lord', how can he be his son?" And with this, it becomes clear that the status of Jesus goes even beyond the royalty of David's line, but is Lord.

This overview allows us to appreciate Matthew's introduction of the title of Jesus in the call of these blind men. This connection of Son of David with miraculous power

gives to the royal identity a new authorization from heaven.

In Mt 9:27, as we have noted, the audience hears Jesus called Son of David for the first time outside the infancy narratives. Although those narratives allow the audience to recognize the implications of that title, the same realization cannot be presumed for the blind men. Yet they have chosen that epithet for Jesus and linked it to an authority to give them their sight as they cry, “Have mercy on us!” Scholars have proposed two different reasons for the connection between the title Son of David and miracles, a) the traditions that Solomon, David’s son, had miraculous powers; and b) that this healing power belongs to the royal messianic aspect of Jesus as Son of David.⁵¹

(a) Solomon, son of David and healer

This first interpretation mainly focuses on Jesus as a healer and is based upon documents that describe Solomon, Son of David, being attributed with both healing and exorcism.⁵² The fact is that Solomon is known and referred to as Son of David in the OT in all but one text, where that title is given to Absalom (2Sam 13:1).⁵³ Duling observes ‘the Solomon trajectory’ beginning with 1 Kings 4:29-34. In that summary statement, the wisdom of Solomon is celebrated with excessive praise and attributions of power over nature:

⁵¹ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 47.

⁵² Loren Fisher, “Can This be the Son of David?” in *Jesus and the Historian: Written in Honor of Ernest Cadman Colwell*, ed. F. T. Trotter (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 82-92; K. Berger, “Die Königlichen Messiastraditionen des Neuen Testaments,” in *New Testament Studies* 20 (1973-74), 1-44; D. C. Duling, “Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David,” in *Harvard Theological Review* 68 (1975), 235-52; B. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God The Christology of Matthew 1-2 in the Setting of the Gospel* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 158-215; Bruce Chilton, “Jesus ben David: Reflections on the Davidsshnfrage,” in *JSNT* 14 (1982), 88-112; Gundry, *Matthew*, 176; Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 1-7, 156-58; idem, *Matthew* 8-18, 136.

⁵³ Fisher, “Can This Be the Son of David?” 91; Davies and Allison, *Matthew* 8-18, 135.

²⁹God gave Solomon very great wisdom, discernment, and breadth of understanding as vast as the sand on the seashore, ³⁰so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the East, and all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹He was wiser than anyone else including Ethan the Ezrahite – wiser than Herman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his name spread to all the surrounding nations. ³²He composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five. ³³He would speak of trees, from the cedar that is in the Lebanon to the hyssop that grows in the wall; he would speak of animals and birds, and reptiles and fish. ³⁴People came from all the nations to hear the wisdom of Solomon; they came from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom.

Although there is no mention of Solomon as an exorcist or healer in this passage, some ancient writers interpret this passage as such. In LXX version of Wis 7:15-22, Solomon speaks of the wisdom that has become his. Especially in vv 17-21, the connection with knowledge of the workings of nature has been given to him.

17 For he has given me certain knowledge of the things that are, namely, to know how the world was made, and the operation of the elements: 18 The beginning, ending, and midst of the times: the alterations of the turning of the sun, and the change of seasons: 19 The circuits of years, and the positions of stars: 20 The natures of living creatures, and the fury of wild beasts: the violence of winds, and the reasonings of humankind: the diversities of plants and the powers of roots: 21 **And all such things as are either secret or manifest, them I know.** (emphasis mine)

According to Duling, this understanding of wisdom including 'secret' things invites the further knowledge of things that would respond to magical power and knowledge of how to dislodge demons.⁵⁴ He then shows how Josephus, influenced by 1 Kg 4:29-34, further interprets the idea of his power to compose and his intimate knowledge of nature to allow for knowledge of incantations that would relieve illness or expel demons.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David," 238.

God also enabled him to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science useful and sanative to men. He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return, and this method of cure is of great force unto this day.

Based upon the evidence of texts such as these,⁵⁶ Duling shows that in the first century Solomon would be readily credited as a renowned healer or exorcist.⁵⁷ For that reason, the use of Son of David in a story requiring the power to heal leads Duling to conclude that there is a reference to Solomon. That is, Duling is presupposing that Matthew is conversant with legends about Solomon's magical and exorcising power, which Matthew then applies to Jesus' healing of the two blind men.⁵⁸

A second argument in favor of Matthew's intent to associate Jesus with Solomon's power is that Matthew uses the anarthrous nominative υἱὸς instead of vocative υἱε as in Mk 10:47-8, and he uses this anarthrous nominative only in therapeutic (i.e., healing and exorcising) contexts.⁵⁹ Davies and Allison also comment that Matthew's pattern here is meant to suggest to those familiar with the OT, that Jesus' healing is linked to a Solomonic tradition of Wisdom expressing itself in knowing how to heal and exorcize.⁶⁰ What is at stake here is that these scholars hold that Matthew is not using

⁵⁵ Josephus, "Antiquities of Josephus," *The Works of Josephus*. trans. by William Whiston (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004), 8.2.5 (p.214).

⁵⁶ Among other examples are 11QPs^a, a psalm in Pseudo-Philo's *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, *Testament of Solomon*, *Babylonian Talmud*, etc. See Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David," 239-244; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 136.

⁵⁷ Luz comments that Solomon was never described to heal. See his book, *Matthew 8-20*, 47.

⁵⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 136.

⁵⁹ Chilton, "Jesus *Ben David*," 96; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 136; Gibbs, "Son of David," 448.

Son of David in its royal political sort of Messianic manner, but rather he is introducing an aspect of Son of David that connects to healing. Duling too notes that Matthew's use of the epithet is better translated 'David's Son' (i.e. Solomon) rather than "Son of David" in its more Messianic aspect.⁶¹

The real problem with this argument is that it is built on an argument of grammatical presentation of the anarthrous use of the title, without sufficient evidence that it is dramatically different from Mark's intent. Mark also uses anarthrous form whether in the healing story of Blind Bartimaeus (Mk 10:47-8) or in discussing the relation of the Messiah to the "Son of David", i.e. a Messianic context (Mk 12:35-7). Moreover, if we consider that Matthew uses the titular form only one time (Mt 12:23) and that Mark also used the anarthrous form in the therapeutic context, it is not persuasive to conclude that Matthew uses the anarthrous form to emphasize the therapeutic context. Carson has even suggested that it is possible that the anarthrous form may just be the result of a Hebrew influenced construction.⁶² Matthew does not distinguish those usages in his gospel.⁶³ Secondly, the only time that Solomon appears in Matthew's gospel is in his copying of two Q texts, neither of which has anything to do with healing or exorcism. First Matt 6:29//Q 12:27 uses Solomon in all his kingly splendor to make the point that the field lilies surpass even him in their exquisite natural God-given beauty. Secondly, as part of a Q cluster, Mt 12:42// Q 11:31 recalls Solomon as the king who was so wise, that

⁶⁰ Ibid., 136.

⁶¹ Thus this phrase is translated as 'David's son' rather than 'Son of David' to designate Solomon.

⁶² Carson, *Matthew*, 233.

⁶³ Chilton, "Jesus *ben David*," 96.

the Queen of the South travelled all the way to hear it. So we have no evidence that Matthew intends a Solomonic parallel.⁶⁴ Moreover, Matthew does not invite the listener to make the connection by means of any direct allusion to him.

(b) Son of David, royal messiah

The second interpretation of ‘υἱὸς Δαυίδ (Son of David)’ in Mt 9:27 as the royal messianic Son of David is far more popular and persuasive.⁶⁵ When Matthew copies the controversy story in Mark, where Jesus challenges the Pharisees over whose son the Messiah is, Son of David is being used in a Messianic context. So when in Matt 9:27 these blind men address Jesus as “Son of David”, the only context either before or after this text in the gospel, is a Messianic one. Rather, the two blind men’s cry alerts the audience that Jesus is being recognized as Davidic Messiah even by those who do not have physical sight.

Here then, Matthew frankly prepares his audience for Matt 11:5, where the very first sign of the Messianic fulfillment is “the blind see”, a reference to Isaiah 35:5 (“Then, the eyes of the blind shall be opened”).⁶⁶

What is important to keep in mind is that this dissertation addresses an early section of the Matthean gospel. As we noted, Matt 9:27 is the first time that the adult

⁶⁴ Baxter, “Healing and the Son of David,” 47.

⁶⁵ C. Burger, *Jesus als Davidsson Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 168-70; J. M. Gibbs, “Son of David,” 446-64; Kingsbury, *Matthew Structure, Christology, Kingdom* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 99-103; idem, “The Title Son of David in Matthew’s Gospel,” in *JBL* 95 (1976), 597; Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 47-49; W. R. G. Loader, “Son of David, Blindness, Possession, and Duality in Matthew,” in *CBQ* 44 (1982), 570-585; Kim Paffenroth, “Jesus as Anointed and Healing Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew,” in *Biblica* 80 (1999), 547-554; Wayne Baxter, “Healing and the “Son of David”: Matthew’s Warrant,” in *NovT* 48 (2006), 36-50; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 253; Carson, *Matthew*, 233; Morris, *Matthew*, 233.

⁶⁶ Carson, “Matthew,” 233.

Jesus is called Son of David in the gospel. Our point is that the perception of the title 'Son of David' is not fixed but developed according to the progression of the story. Matthew uses Son of David in a Messianic sense, but as the gospel develops, that Son of David portrait will steadily grow to underline the fact that he is a merciful Royal Messiah, and finally Son of God. In this first story where Son of David is used, it is ironic that even those who do not have physical sight seem to have an interior sight, one that recognizes the true identity of Jesus.

Jesus' Healing

Mk 10:49-52a ⁴⁹καὶ στάς ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Φωνήσατε αὐτόν. καὶ φωνοῦσιν τὸν τυφλὸν λέγοντες αὐτῷ, Θάρσει, ἔγειρε, φωνεῖ σε. ⁵⁰ὁ δὲ ἀποβαλὼν τὸ ἱμάτιον αὐτοῦ ἀναπηδήσας ἦλθεν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν. ⁵¹καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Τί σοι θέλεις ποιήσω; ὁ δὲ τυφλὸς εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ῥαββουνι, ἵνα ἀναβλέψω. ^{52a}καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ὑπάγε, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε. (⁴⁹Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." ⁵⁰So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." ^{52a}Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well.")

Mt 20:32-34a ³²καὶ στάς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐφώνησεν αὐτοὺς καὶ εἶπεν, Τί θέλετε ποιήσω ὑμῖν; ³³λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Κύριε, ἵνα ἀνοιγῶσιν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ ἡμῶν. ^{34a}σπλαγχνισθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἥψατο τῶν ὀμμάτων αὐτῶν, (³²Jesus stood still and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." ^{34a}Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes.)

Mt 9:28-29 ²⁸ἔλθόντι δὲ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ τυφλοί, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Πιστεύετε ὅτι δύναμαι τοῦτο ποιῆσαι; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Ναὶ κύριε ²⁹τότε ἥψατο τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν λέγων, Κατὰ τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν γενηθήτω ὑμῖν (²⁸When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." ²⁹Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you.")

Unlike the Markan account of Bartimaeus in Mk 10:46-52 (which Matthew more closely follows at 20:29-34), in this story Jesus will search for privacy away from the open road. He enters 'the house' not 'a house', and here Matthew suggests a familiar

dwelling. He is forcing the blind men to come away from the crowds.

It is important to recognize the enormity of the miracle. While eye ailments had a variety of treatments,⁶⁷ blindness itself had no medical remedy. Eleftheria Bernidaki-Aldous studies the significance of blindness in antiquity and writes:

In a shame-culture, in which honor is the highest good, utter dishonor is the supreme misfortune. Blindness (lack of *light*) which, at all times, vies with dishonor to win the title of “the worst of sufferings” is another condition which (for the Greeks) leaves no room for happiness.⁶⁸

When Bernadaki-Aldous specifies “Greeks”, she involves also the whole of the Mediterranean of the first century, which had experienced intensive Hellenization. We need not rely solely on the Greek tragedies and Greek classical poetry, but cross the centuries to listen to the Jewish text, the Babylonian Talmud, where Rabbi Joshua ben Levi is assigned to have taught: “Four are accounted as dead: A poor man, a leper, a blind person, and one who is childless.”⁶⁹

Across the Mediterranean only the god/man doctor Asclepius was famed for being

⁶⁷ The extreme that people went to in order to save their sight is heartbreaking. Does the audience of Matthew imagine what each of these men might have already gone through? An example of two folk remedies to cure eye ‘fluxes’ and other indications of serious eye problems are as follows: “To eye fluxes is applied beef suet boiled with oil; scabrous eyes are smeared with the same and deer’s horn reduced to ash, but the tips by themselves are thought to be more efficacious.” “Goat’s dung with honey is not unvalued ointment for eye fluxes, or the marrow for eye pains, or a hare’s lung, and for dimness its gall with raisin wine or honey. Wolf’s fat also or pig’s marrow is prescribed as an ointment for opthamalia. But it is said that those who carry a fox’s tongue in a bracelet will never suffer from opthamalia.” Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* (10 vols; Trans. H. Rackham *et al.*; London: Heinemann, 1938-1963), 5.28.47.167 and 28.47.172 respectively. Reference owed to Cotter, *Miracles in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, 214-215.

⁶⁸ Eleftheria Bernadaki-Aldous, *Blindness in a Culture of Light: Especially in the Case of “Oedipus at Colonus” of Sophocles* (American University Studies 17/8; New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 103. Reference is owed to Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories: Portrait Through Encounter* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 56-57.

⁶⁹ Nedarim, *The Babylonian Talmud* (ed. I. Epstein; trans. H. Freedman; 6 vols; London: Soncino, 1936), 5.3:206. Reference owed to Cotter, *The Christ of the Miracle Stories*, 57.

able to restore sight.⁷⁰ We have only two stories in extant sources for stories where a human is attributed with having restored sight to the blind. The first concerns Vespasian, the newly appointed emperor, who is said to have cured a blind man sent to him by the god Serapis. This is an example, Tacitus reports, of “heaven’s favor” and “a certain partiality of the gods”⁷¹

During the months while Vespasian was waiting at Alexandria for the regular season of the summer winds and a settled sea, many marvels occurred to mark the favor of heaven and a certain partiality of the gods towards him. (emphasis mine)

In this story, the sense is that the gods empowered Vespasian to do this miracle. The second attribution of a miracle of restored sight is told of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratos. As part of a larger miracle story, Philostratus concludes, “And another man had had both of his eyes out and he went away having recovered the sight of both of them.”⁷² This hero’s legend, however, would not have been available yet to the evangelist. Still, it reflects a certain readiness in the first century world to understand that divine powers can be granted to a human being. Yet, as we see, so very few humans are said to have restored sight, although they are claimed to have performed so many other healing miracles.

In Matt 9:27-31, the evangelist presents the first story of Jesus’ cure of two blind

⁷⁰ Asclepius cures Alcetas of Halieis, Hermon of Thasus, and the soldier Valerius Aper of complete blindness through appearances and revelations of rituals of devotion they must perform in Inscriptiones Graecae 4.1.121-122: Stele 1.18; 4.1.121-122: Stele 2.22; and 14.966, respectively (Emma J. Edelstein and Ludwig Edelstein, “Inscriptiones Graecae” *Asclepius* [2 vols; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1945] 18) .

⁷¹ Tacitus, *The Histories and Annals* (2 vols; trans. Clifford H. Moore; London: Heinemann, 1931) 2. 4.81.

⁷² Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (2 vols; trans. F. C. Coneybeare; London: Heineman, 1912) 1. 3. 39.

men and this character of demanding privacy causes us to notice that also in Mark's first story of Jesus' restoration of sight, The Blind Man of Bethsaida (Mk 8:22-26), Jesus will also seek privacy, taking the man outside the village away from the friends who brought him, and after the miracle warning him, "Do not even go into the village" (v. 26). For Markan scholars, this reticence of Jesus is usually assigned to the theme of the "Messianic Secret." This is the recognition of the enormity of this miracle and its implications. Although Matthew does not adopt the Markan theme known as the "Messianic secret," he does present a private miracle here. For in Jewish tradition, miracles like these are indeed signs of the Messiah, as in Isaiah 42:6-7a.⁷³

I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations.
To open the eyes of the blind...

But Morris goes further beyond Messianic expectations, bringing out the connection between the power of giving sight and divinity. Gundry too sees a kind of revelation of Jesus' divinity in this miracle.⁷⁴ Certainly, in the first century world where blindness was final, this miracle could only be interpreted as a revelation of Jesus' divine empowerment by God, and in this way divine himself.

The impression that Jesus did not look for public acclaim is seen in the way Matthew created a private miracle when Jesus cures Peter's mother in law. Again, in the miracle placed just previous to this one, in the miracle of the raising of the leader's daughter, the crowds are sent away from the interior of the house, and Jesus enters. With

⁷³ Morris, *Matthew*, 232-3

⁷⁴ Gundry, *Matthew*, 176.

one graceful gesture he takes the hand of the deceased girl, and when she rises, the gospel moves Jesus away again swiftly. There is no pause for acclaim.

v. 28c-d καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Πιστεύετε ὅτι δύναμαι τοῦτο ποιῆσαι; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ ἔλθόντι δὲ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ τυφλοί, καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Πιστεύετε ὅτι δύναμαι τοῦτο ποιῆσαι; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Ναὶ κύριε ²⁹τότε ἤψατο τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν λέγων, Κατὰ τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν γενηθήτω ὑμῖν (²⁸ Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." ²⁹Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you.") .

Jesus questions whether the men believe, and this is singular in the gospels, a special feature of Matthew's understanding. The petitioner must have faith. The men reassure him, "Yes Lord," and only then does Jesus touch their eyes. But even as he does so, he qualifies it by informing them the results will depend on the degree of their faith, "according to your faith let it be done to you". Here Matthew's Jesus repeats the qualification he used with the centurion who asked for a cure for his houseboy: ὥς ἐπιστευσας γενηθήτω σοι. This too was his own insertion on that Q text which ended with Jesus' exclamation over the centurion's faith which exceeded anything he had found in Israel. Nevertheless, Matthew's qualification of the miracle is special in this way. The faith of the petitioner is crucial to the miracle. We can see this later in Matthew's redaction of Mark's story of the SyroPhoenician mother's plea for her demonized daughter (Mk 7: 24-30//Matt 15:21-28). When the woman answers Jesus' rebuff with her sweet reply that even the dogs under the table eat the crumbs from the children's table, Mark's gospel holds Jesus' response as "For this saying, you may go, the demon has left your daughter" (Mk 7:29). In Matthew Jesus responds: "Woman, great is your faith. Let it be done for you as you wish." Here again, for Matthew, the determination of

the woman is a sign of her confidence in Jesus, her faith. She will not leave, but finds a way to argue for her daughter's inclusion among those to receive his miracles. Having exclaimed on her faith, Jesus' next statement is rather close to what he states to both the centurion and to these blind men, so that there is a combination of recognition of faith, and a statement that the miracle will be dependent on her desire "ὦ γύναι μεγάλη σου ἡ πίστις· γενηθήτω σοι ὡς θέλεις".

Thus, in Matthew's account, the statement of the miracle is also a statement of the profound faith of those who came to Jesus. There is an encounter then that Matthew wishes to underline. Matthew wants to underline the fact that Jesus' miracles were dependent on the faith of the petitioner. He explained that on his part he was willing. The miracle that would occur and the degree of success of the miraculous occurrence were not dependent on their degree of faith.

Matthew's Addition: Spread of the News

Mt 9:30-31 ³⁰καὶ ἠνεώχθησαν αὐτῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί. καὶ ἐνεβριμήθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Ὁρᾶτε μηδεὶς γινωσκέτω ³¹οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες διεφήμισαν αὐτὸν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γῇ ἐκεῖνῃ (³⁰And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this." ³¹But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district.)

The fact that the men received their sight, as we have noted, not only affirms Jesus' extraordinary divine authority, whether his story is heard by gentiles or Jews, but also gives Jesus' qualifying statement that the miracle would rely on their faith, is testimony to an amazing confidence on the part of these men. Now, the audience imagines them receiving the light of day for the first time. It is a stunning moment in the story for any listener.

Verse 30b: Jesus' prohibition

Jesus' prohibition emphasizes the privacy that he desires. This was seen earlier by his entering the house so that the men had to follow him there. Here again this story recalls Mark's first story of Jesus giving sight (Mk 8:22-26), when Jesus warns the man not to go back into the village.

Mk 8:26 καὶ ἀπέστειλεν αὐτὸν εἰς οἶκον αὐτοῦ λέγων, Μηδὲ εἰς τὴν κώμην εἰσέλθης (Then he sent him away to his home, saying, "Do not even go into the village").

Mt 9:30b καὶ ἐνεβριμήθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Ὁρᾶτε μηδεὶς γινωσκέτω οἱ δὲ ἐξεληθόντες διεφήμισαν αὐτὸν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γῇ ἐκείνῃ (Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this. But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district).

Then, one preeminent question is why Matthew used the motif of Jesus' stern prohibition in this story. Why is a case of disobedience present here and not where Mark does in the story of the leper?

Mk 1:45 ὁ δὲ ἐξελθὼν ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν πολλὰ καὶ διαφημίζειν τὸν λόγον, ὥστε μηκέτι αὐτὸν δύνασθαι φανερώς εἰς πόλιν εἰσελθεῖν, ἀλλ' ἔξω ἐπ' ἐρήμοις τόποις ἦν· καὶ ἤρχοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντοθεν (But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter).

Scholars strive to explain the combination of Jesus' order and the disobedience of the cured men in this story and its effect here in the gospel. Meier notes the oddity of the prohibition since it breaks "Matthew's tendency to have revelation go public."⁷⁵

Gundry briefly comments that "Jesus' stern prohibition prepares for an emphasis on Jesus' humility (cf. 11:29; 12:16, 17-21; 21:5)."⁷⁶ Jesus does not want fame for

⁷⁵ Meier, *Matthew*, 99.

himself. France has a similar view, and suggests that Matthew is anticipated 12:16, where Matthew states that when Jesus saw crowds following him, he departed. Although the people pursue him, and he cures them all, Matthew states, “and he ordered all of them not to make him known.” Here, Matthew quotes Isaiah 42:1-4. In Matthew 9:30, Jesus’ prohibition is meant, “to dissociate Jesus from any image of being a self-publicist (cf. v. 19).”⁷⁷ The question that remains is why Matthew has waited until this particular miracle for the dynamic of Jesus commanding silence and the men disobeying him.

Some scholars go back to the blind men’s epithet for Jesus, “Son of David,” and propose that Jesus did not want them to think of his miracle as a sign that he as the political Royal Son of David, the military Messiah, ready to liberate the people.⁷⁸ They point out that Jesus was convicted of political pretensions and insurrectionist behavior, false claims that would result in his condemnation to the cross. The difficulty with this interpretation is that, in the context of the story, Matthew has not given us any idea that the blind men thought that the Son of David title was a military one. They seem to connect it with a Messianic saying, such as Matthew himself will copy from Q, the fulfillment passage in Matt 11:1-5, which has nothing of the military about it.

For example, Davies and Allison explain that having Jesus issue the prohibition is “to make the men’s disobedience more pronounced.”⁷⁹ That is, the enormity of the

⁷⁶ Gundry, *Matthew*, 178.

⁷⁷ France, *Matthew*, 172.

⁷⁸ Carson, *Matthew*, 233; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 254; Meier, *Matthew*, 99.

⁷⁹ Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 138.

miracle was too much for them to keep private, and Luz concurs. Luz notes that with this statement, Matthew explains how this story is increasing the reputation of Jesus throughout the district, which Luz describes as “all Israel”.⁸⁰ Does this explain satisfactorily why Matthew adopts the stern prohibition of Jesus? The previous story of the raising of the leader’s daughter also concluded with the note that news of Jesus’ miracle was spreading through the district (Matt 9:26). Quite astutely, Luz looks ahead to the conclusion of the final miracle of the cluster, Matt 9:32-34, and notes that this spreading of the news “prepares for the summary description of the crowds’ reaction in 9:33.”⁸¹

Verse 31: The spread of the news

Matt 9:31 οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες διεφήμισαν αὐτὸν ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γῇ ἐκείνῃ (But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district).

Mk 1:45 ὁ δὲ ἐξελθὼν ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν πολλὰ καὶ διαφημίζειν τὸν λόγον, ὥστε μηκέτι αὐτὸν δύνασθαι φανερώς εἰς πόλιν εἰσελθεῖν, ἀλλ’ ἔξω ἐπ’ ἐρήμοις τόποις ἦν· καὶ ἤρχοντο πρὸς αὐτὸν πάντοθεν (But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter).

Although Matthew seems to have used the disobedience of the leper to Jesus’ prohibition in his own account of the blind men, he has done so with a difference. In Mark, the results of the leper’s disobedience are shown to result in Jesus’ suffering. A kind of transference takes place. Now Jesus is the one who cannot go into the town openly but must stay in the desert places, while the leper, now cured may enter the towns freely. The shadow of the cross falls on the story.

⁸⁰ Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 49.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

Matthew excises all this. He uses the disobedience of the blind men to explain how the reputation of Jesus was spreading more and more. First the news about his raising of the dead girl is spreading around the district, and now his opening of the eyes of the blind. Those two together make a powerful message.

Luz's insight holds one important realization of the dynamic of the gospel. Matthew is preparing for a frank statement about the 'crowds' response to Jesus which occurs at the conclusion of the cluster. Despite Jesus' efforts to avoid fame, as Gundry and France both propose, he cannot stem the tide of excitement and joy, first of the family of the girl who now lives, brought to life by Jesus, and now these two blind men who tell everyone about the Jesus, Son of David, who opened their eyes. It remains now for Matthew to complete the third cluster with his miracle of exorcism, and a silent man, now free to speak. Yet there is another reason soon to be revealed for Jesus' prohibition. Here we suggest that Matthew also prepares his readers for the open attack on Jesus by the religious authorities, the Pharisees who will tell the people that his power belongs to the ruler of demons.

The Third Stage: Healing of a Mute Demoniac (Mt 9:32-34// Q 11:14-15)

³²Αὐτῶν δὲ ἐξερχομένων ἰδοὺ προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ ἄνθρωπον κωφὸν δαιμονιζόμενον ³³καὶ ἐκβληθέντος τοῦ δαιμονίου ἐλάλησεν ὁ κωφός. καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες, Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ³⁴οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον, Ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια

³²*After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him. ³³And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel."* ³⁴*But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons."*

Introduction

The last miracle story of the third cluster and of Matthew 8-9 is also a doublet

(Mt 9:32-34//12:22-23//Q 11:14-15).⁸² That is, he doubles the placement of Q 11:14-15, as he did his use of Mk 10:46-52 (Matt 9:27-31//20:29-34). In each use of the miracle story, Matthew will conclude with a charge of the Pharisees that Jesus' exorcism is effective thanks to his collusion with the ruler of demons. But he does so progressively. The first time, here in v. 34, we notice that Jesus does not argue with them. They have shown their own evil mind to the people in complete contrast to their own amazed cry, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel!" Matthew then provides a summary of the careful details of Matthew 5-9, when he writes,

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.

As for the Pharisaic insult that Jesus' exorcism is owed to Beelzebul, Matthew will wait and use it following the Markan order, where it is placed after the account of the Man with the Withered Hand, (Mk 3:1-6//Matt 12:9-14) where the Pharisees respond to the miracle of the man's healing by going out to conspire against Jesus, on the Sabbath, "how to destroy him" (Mk 3:6//Matt 12:14). Then, the second time the Pharisees charge that Jesus is in collusion with Beelzebul, Matthew will follow with the full defense from Mark and also from Q, a defense which ends with a warning to them.

Matthew will now use this concluding miracle drawn from Q, where Jesus' will astonish the people with the exercise of his power to free this man from his bondage, the imprisonment of his power to express himself in speech. This miracle story holds importance in three ways: 1) It is the first time in the gospel where crowds will be said

⁸² Goulder explains this doublet from the tradition of "the midrashic exposition of borrowing features from a narrative and repeating them in a similar narrative." He classifies 9:32-34 as a clearer doublet than 9:27-31. See his book, *Midrash and Lection*, 37.

to be amazed by Jesus' miraculous power, claiming "Never has anything like this be seen in Israel"; 2) it provides the third messianic sign from Isaiah ("the deaf hear"),⁸³ which Jesus will invite the disciples of John to note as his apologetic answer to their query; and 3) it prepares for Jesus' sending of his disciples in chapter 10, as we shall explain.

Jesus' Encounter with the Demoniacs

Mt 9:32 Αὐτῶν δὲ ἐξερχομένων ἰδοὺ προσήνεγκαν αὐτῷ ἄνθρωπον κωφὸν δαιμονιζόμενον (After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him).

Mt 12:22 Τότε προσήνεχθη αὐτῷ δαιμονιζόμενος τυφλὸς καὶ κωφός (Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute).

The story begins with Matthew's effort to create a smooth link between the preceding story of the blind men,⁸⁴ but a certain awkwardness remains because his note that the blind men disobeyed him in spreading the news to the district, has taken the audience away from the story to imagine the cured men going about with their story. Frequently "they" are understood to mean the two blind men.⁸⁵ This is Matthew's effort to bring the reader back to focus on Jesus. If this is the interpretation, then the mute demoniac was also brought before Jesus while Jesus remained inside the house. The difficulty here is that the conclusion of the story features a public scene, in which crowds are praising Jesus, and the Pharisees are there to charge him with collusion with the ruler of demons.

⁸³ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 39; Carson, *Matthew*, 234; Gundry, *Matthew*, 179; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 138. ὁ κωφός can be translated as mute, deaf or both. Here this word is best interpreted as 'mute and deaf' as we will explain in v.32.

⁸⁴ Nolland, *Matthew*, 403.

⁸⁵ Morris, *Matthew*, 236; Nolland, *Matthew*, 403; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 138; Gundry, *Matthew*, 179; Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 257.

Another possible interpretation is that Jesus and his disciples (v.19) went out the house and they were on the way to some place from the house in Mt 9:28. This would fit the context much better given the summary statement in v. 31 of the healed men going out to spread the news. What Matthew must mean is that after healing the blind men, Jesus went out the house (presumably in the company of the disciples) and it was on his way (cf. v.27) that the demoniac was brought to Jesus.

ἄνθρωπον κωφόν

The way Matthew understands this man's condition includes both deafness and muteness. Although κωφός is used for those who are mute, in first century usage it could be used for those who were deaf or those who were both deaf and mute.⁸⁶ Usually the reason a person could not speak was due to deafness and the two conditions can be seen to go together. We can see this assumption very clearly in Luke's gospel when the angel punishes Zachariah for his doubting the possibility of his barren wife to conceive, and renders him 'silent', "not being able to speak" until these things come to pass (Lk 1:20). When Zechariah emerges he must use motions to try to communicate (v. 22). But when John is born and Elizabeth wants to name him John, "they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him". Zachariah could have heard their question. He wasn't deaf. Here we can see the narrator's automatically assuming the two conditions together. Carson notes that indeed the two disabilities are "closely linked together, especially if deafness is congenital."⁸⁷

⁸⁶ "κωφός," in *BGAD* (Chicago, IL and London: England, 1979), 462. Nolland defines this as being applied to "people whose capacity to communicate with others is severely compromised because they are either deaf or mute or both." Nolland, *Matthew*, 403

We can see Matthew combining those conditions when he redacts Mark's story of the man who was deaf with a speech impediment “κωφὸν καὶ μογιλάλον” (Mk 7:32). Matthew has rather included a reference to those powers in a summary he matches of up Mark's in Matt 15:31//Mk 7:37:

Mk 7:37b καλῶς πάντα πεποίηκεν' καὶ τοὺς κωφούς ποιεῖ ἀκούειν καὶ ἀλάλους λαλεῖν (“He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak”).

Matt 15:31: ὥστε τὸν ὄχλον θαυμάσαι βλέποντας κωφούς λαλοῦντας κυλλοὺς ὑγεῖς καὶ ξωλοὺς περιπατοῦντας καὶ τυφλοὺς βλέποντας · καὶ ἐδοξασά τὸν θεὸν Ἰσραὴλ (So that the crowd wondered when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel).

Translations of the word then really rely on the context, or the outcome of the miracle. So κωφὸς is translated as “mute” for Matt 9:32 and 33 and in Matt 15:30, 31, because the miracle results in the ability to speak. But it is translated as deaf in Matt 11:5//Lk 7:22//Q 7:22 and in Matthew 12:22, as in “blind and deaf” because the results are that the person is said to be able to hear. (In Mark, κωφὸς always means someone who is deaf [Mk 7:32, 37; and 9:25]).

What we can see in Matthew's representation of Mark in Matt 15:31 shows that, like so many people in his own time, he presumed that if someone is described as κωφὸς the person is mute because they are deaf. If they are able to speak, it is because they can also hear. So scholars are quite right to say that the correct translation in 9:23 is ‘mute’ because the result is that the man can speak.⁸⁷ France's argument that the affliction only

⁸⁷ Carson, *Matthew*, 234. See also France, *Matthew*, 173; Luz, *Matthew* 8-20, 50 footnote 7.

⁸⁸ Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 257; France, *Matthew*, 173; Fenton, *Matthew*, 146; Schweizer, *Matthew*, 231; Harrington, *Matthew*, 132 footnote 32.

affects the speech is that the description “ἄνθρωπον κωφὸν δαιμονιζόμενον (a demoniac)” is such that “this case was regarded as primarily one of possession, with the dumbness as a byproduct.”⁸⁹ France is correct in his specification, but we would say that when Matthew wrote that the man was κωφὸς he could well have presumed that this meant that the man was rendered completely deaf. Furthermore we do not know for how long this person had had this problem. Was it from childhood?

The story is very small, but it represents a situation with grievous significance for the demonized man. His condition itself rendered him separate from his community. Something of this is already evident in the regulations and groupings of deaf/mutes in the *Mishnah* regulations. For example, *Mishnah* Haggigah that deals with the Festal Offering holds:

All are subject to appear [before the Lord] excepting a deaf-mute, an imbecile, a child, one of doubtful sex, one of double sex, women, slaves that have not been freed, a man that is lame or blind or sick or aged.⁹⁰

Another example reads,

A deaf-mute, an imbecile, or a minor may have their worth or Valuation vowed by another, but they may not vow for another's worth since they have no understanding.⁹¹

We can see that even persons who had been born with this disability, apart from its being the result of demon possession were considered damaged and second best. If we look at the groupings here, they reflect a set of people unable to take care of their own lives, or even be subject to appear before the Lord at the festival as though being unable

⁸⁹ France, *Matthew*, 173.

⁹⁰ “Hagigah,” in *Mishnah*, 1.1, (211).

⁹¹ “Aralahin: Vows of Vaidation,” in *Mishnah* , 1.1 (544)

to hear/speak rendered them incapable of entering into the intelligent and soulful participation with the others in their community.

ἄνθρωπον κωφὸν δαιμονιζόμενον

In the Markan gospel, there is also a tradition of a demon who has possessed the youth from his childhood and keeps him mute. Upon its expulsion, a great scream is heard from the demon, enraged to be excised from the youth, and making its presence clearly heard, just as it has kept silence in its deadly torturing of the boy.

Matthew agrees to Mark's story of possession, but the signs of the demon are in the epilepsy which Matthew interprets from the Father's description to Jesus in Mk 9:22. Instead Matthew uses this story from Q, where an adult man is kept in silence, under the control of a demon.

Jesus' Healing and Israel's Response

Q 11:14-15 καὶ **ἐξεβαλεν** δαιμονιον κωφον· καὶ **ἐκβληθέντος** τοῦ δαιμονίου ἐλάλησεν ὁ κωφός καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι. ¹⁵τινὲς δὲ εἶπον· ἐν Βεελζεβούλ τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (And he cast out a demon <which made a person> mute. And once the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds were amazed. ¹⁵But some said: By Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, he casts out demons!).

Matt 9:33-34 καὶ ἐκβληθέντος τοῦ δαιμονίου ἐλάλησεν ὁ κωφός καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ. ³⁴οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον, Ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (And when the demon has been cast out, the mute man spoke, and the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel." ³⁴But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons.").

Mt 12:24 οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες εἶπον, Οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβούλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων (But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons").

In his redaction, we can see that Matthew has altered his usual custom of redacting material so that more focus is placed on an attestation of Jesus' power and

authority, and instead shifted the balance of this very brief Q story, so that the attention moves to the response of the people to Jesus. That is, he has removed the statement that Jesus cast out the demon as in Q, and attests to its accomplishment in the genitive absolute, “And when the demon had been cast out”.

Q11:14a καὶ ἔξεβαλεν δαιμονιον κωφόν· καὶ ἐκβληθέντος τοῦ δαιμονίου
(And he cast out a demon <which made a person> mute. And once the
demon was cast out),

Mt 9:33a καὶ ἐκβληθέντος τοῦ δαιμονίου (And when the demon had been
cast out),

The audience has already seen the authority of Jesus that the demons in Matt 8:31 immediately capitulated and fearfully asked him, “What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?” (Matt 8:29). The degree of Jesus’ power, as Matthew maintained the Markan tradition, is such that the people of Gerasa beg him to leave. There, on the non-Jewish side of the Sea of Galilee, they themselves are fearful to Jesus’ power over the forces of evil that had fiercely oppressed the two men, and prevented anyone from passing along the road. The Q story for all its own brevity simply takes for granted the command of Jesus to dispel immediately, a demon that had kept this man silent. Matthew further tightens the story, as we see, so that the audience receives the impression that it was a matter that was resolved swiftly, and this terrible possession of the man was over. The further redaction of Matthew on the story, besides foreshortening the miracle event, is to add to the response of the people to Jesus, as he concludes the miracle clusters.

The first response: The crowds’ amazement

Q 11:14b καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι (And the crowds were amazed).

Mt 9:33b καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ **Q**Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ (And the crowds were amazed, **saying Never has anything like this been seen in Israel**”).

Matthew adds to the Q statement of the people’s amazement, giving not only their praise, but adding an interpretation to their amazement as well. First of all, by placing the Q exorcism story here in the last place of the miracle story clusters, Matthew had also created a scene in which for the first time in the gospel his audience hears that the crowds are ‘amazed’ at Jesus. The response of “amazement”⁹² has only occurred twice in the gospel prior to this: first Jesus’ response to the faith of the centurion who is the only person to tell Jesus that his authority is sufficient and that he only need give an order of healing without the demeaning visit to someone far below him in status (Matt 8:10). Secondly, Jesus’ disciples are amazed at Jesus’ authority to still the storm (Matt 8:27). Now it is time for the crowds to express amazement at Jesus over his authority to cast out demons. Significantly, we should add here, the very next time the response of amazement is used by Matthew is again by crowds and again on account of his miracles (Matt 15:31). That summary statement which recalls Jesus’ response to the disciples of John in Matt 11:5//Q 7:22, the fulfillment text of Isaiah as we have frequently mentioned, but this time it parallels to some degree Mark 7:37b. The parallel of those two texts have

⁹² Amazement is not used frequently in either Mark or in Matthew. As will be seen here, Mark uses ‘amazed’ 4x and Matthew 7x, but they only agree on one pericope, the amazement of Pilate at the utter silence of Jesus, as the charges against him are made. (Mk 15:5//Matt 27:14). A brief review of usage is supplied here for Mark and Matthew. **Mk 5:20** (people amazed after the Gerasene Demoniac was exorcized); 6:6 (Jesus was amazed at the lack of faith in his town; **:15:5 (Pilate was amazed at Jesus’ silence)**);⁴⁴ (Pilate was ‘wondering’ if Jesus could be dead already); **Matt 8:10** (Jesus was amazed at the faith of the centurion), 27 (the disciples are amazed at Jesus’ stilling the storm); 9:33 (the crowds are amazed at Jesus’ miracle) ; 15:31 (the crowds are amazed at Jesus’ miracles); 21:20 (the disciples were amazed to see the fig tree withered) ; 22:22 (the enemies of Jesus, go away amazed at his answer); **27:14 (Pilate was amazed at Jesus’ silence)**.

already been presented above in the discussion of Matthew's understanding of κωφός.

They should be presented again, to show that the Matthean redaction holds another similarity to his redaction of the Q story of the crowd's amazed response in Matt 9:33.

Mk 7:37b καλῶς πάντα πεποίηκεν· καὶ τοὺς κωφοὺς ποιεῖ ἀκούειν καὶ ἀλάλους λαλεῖν (“He has done all things well; he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.”)

Matt 15:31: ὥστε τὸν ὄχλον θαύμασαι βλέποντους κωφοὺς λαλοῦντας· κυλλοὺς ὑγεῖς καὶ ξωλοὺς περιτατοῦντας καὶ τυφλοὺς βλέποντας· καὶ ἐδόξασαν τὸν θεὸν Ἰσραὴλ (So that the crowd wondered when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel).

Mt 9:33 καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ (And the crowds were amazed, **saying Never has anything like this been seen in Israel**).

Matt 9:33b. Matthew redacts Q 11:14b by the addition of the actual exclamation of the crowds, which of course, holds its own attestation of the people's interpretation.

Q 11:14b καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι (And the crowds were amazed).

Mt 9:33 καὶ ἐθαύμασαν οἱ ὄχλοι λέγοντες Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ **Q**Οὐδέποτε ἐφάνη οὕτως ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ (And the crowds were amazed, **saying Never has anything like this been seen in Israel**).

This exclamation places Jesus against the backdrop of his Jewish religious world, as we shall see him underline and repeat, although in the third person narration in the summary statement of Matt 15:31.

Israel. The importance of Jesus' relationship to Israel cannot be minimized in this gospel. In Mark, Israel only occurs once, in the mocking of Jesus on the cross by the chief priest and scribes, “Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe” (Mk 15:32//Matt 27:42). In Q, Israel occurs once

(Q 22:30/Matt 19:28), where Jesus promises that those who have followed him will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Matthew introduces its usage ten more times.

The first connection between Israel and Jesus is found in Matthew's infancy narratives, Matt 2:6, where he draws on the prophecy of Micah 5:2 [LXX 5:1] for the scribes' answer to Herod's question about where the Messiah is to be born. The full text should be quoted here, due to its programmatic role for the gospel and its significance for Matt 9:33:

Mt 2:6 Οἱ δὲ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας· οὕτως γὰρ γέγραπται διὰ τοῦ προφήτου· Καὶ σύ Βηθλέεμ γῆ Ἰουδᾶ οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἶ ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν Ἰουδα· ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἐλεύσεται ἡγούμενος ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραήλ ("They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea: for so it has been written by the prophet. And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'").

Micah 5:1 καὶ σύ, βηθλεεμ οἶκος τοῦ Εφραθα, ὀλιγοστὸς εἶ τοῦ εἶναι ἐν χιλιάσιν Ἰουδα· ἐκ σοῦ μοι ἐξελεύσεται τοῦ εἶναι εἰς ἄρχοντα ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ (But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel").

When we compare LXX Micah 5:1 with Matthew's version, he has changed Ephrata to Judah, where indeed the Bethlehem of his day would be understood to be located. More importantly he has changed the contrast from Bethlehem as one of the smallest of the clans, to a statement of reassurance that they are by no means "least", and changed the reference from 'clans' to "rulers". Finally he has changed "rule" to 'shepherd my people Israel.' With this prophecy, Matthew sets up the gospel to prepare for its fulfillment in Jesus.

Besides the appearance of Israel in the angel's messages to Joseph, to first leave

Israel and then return (Matt 3:20, 21), all other uses of Israel encompass the people of the land, and does not refer solely to the location.

As we have noted, in Matt 8:10 Jesus is amazed that the centurion's faith is greater than anything he has seen in Israel.

The next use of Israel as the mark against which religious response is gauged is in fact this exclamation of the people. Now they recognize Jesus' own authority in casting out the demon as something that leaves them amazed, and now at last they recognize the uniqueness of Jesus, for this kind of ease and authority over the demons has then recognize that **'never'** has anything like this been seen in Israel."

The gospel will build on this image of Jesus as 'shepherding' his people Israel in the Mission speech that will follow directly upon these miracle clusters, where Jesus will show his special care for his people when he cautions his disciples "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of Israel" (Matt 10:6), and he promises that they will not have passed through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. Matthew will then recall to mind to his audience Jesus' mission when he inserts into Mark's story of the SyroPhoenician/ Canaanite Mother, "I was only sent to the lost sheep of Israel". Thus, when in Matthew 15:31 the review of Jesus' miracles bring amazement to the people, they 'glorified the God of Israel'. Here the identity of Jesus as miracle worker is seen as an expression of the power of Israel's God.

So, in the development of the gospel, Matthew waits until the end of the miracle clusters to place a focus on the recognition of the amazed people that what they have witnessed belongs to a power and authority 'never seen' in Israel..

The second response by the Pharisees

Q 11:15 τινὲς δὲ εἶπον· ἐν Βεελζεβοὺλ τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (But some said: By Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, he casts out demons!).

Mt 9:34 οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον, Ἐν τῷ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια (But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons").

Mt 12:24 οἱ δὲ Φαρισαῖοι ἀκούσαντες εἶπον, Οὗτος οὐκ ἐκβάλλει τὰ δαιμόνια εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ Βεελζεβοὺλ ἄρχοντι τῶν δαιμονίων (But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons").

The Negative Response. Against the crowds' positive response to Jesus' miracle, the Pharisees show their cynical comments. While the presence of the Pharisees is sudden here,⁹³ we have already seen their hidden but escalating hostility against Jesus (Mt 3:7; 5:20; 9:3, 11, 14).⁹⁴ Now the Pharisees begin to directly attack Jesus and his miracles towards the greatly impressed crowds.⁹⁵ For this purpose, Matthew redacts Q. First of all, Matthew is not hesitant in clarifying that it is the Pharisees who criticize Jesus' miracles.

The charge will be repeated later, following the Markan order, and at that time the Pharisees will use the name of Beelzebul, and receive in response Jesus' full rebuttal, drawing on the material both from Mark and Q.

⁹³ Because v. 34 is missing from the Western textual tradition, some scholars think that it is intruded from Mt 12:24. However, Mt 10:25 presupposes the existence of the criticism of Jesus as Beelzebul. In addition, the plot (i.e., Jesus' prohibition of spreading the news and his sending of his disciples) will not be smooth without the Pharisees' criticism. As Carson comments, "the tide of opposition, which later brought Jesus to the cross, now becomes an essential part of the background to the next discourse (cf. especially 10:16-28)." See Carson, *Matthew*, 234 and also Gundry, *Matthew*, 180; France, *Matthew*, 174; Fenton, *Matthew*, 146; Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 139.

⁹⁴ Probably they are the scribes from Jerusalem in Mk 3:22 (cf. 2:16).

⁹⁵ Of course in the passage the Pharisees do not charge directly against Jesus but against the crowds' positive responses. They are trying to persuade the crowds that their positive response is wrong. See Davies and Allison, *Matthew 8-18*, 139.

The Pharisees. Matthew's presentation of the Pharisees in Matt 9:34 is his special choice. In Q the accusers are not identified. When he reasserts their charge in Matt 12:24, he is overturning the identification in Markan tradition that scribes launched the accusation. From the start, Matthew presents the Pharisees as hypocritical. He names them and the Sadducees as the target of John's 'brood of viper' speech in Q, when the Q text has no specified audience (Q 3:7-9//Matt 3:7-10). Then, we ask, "Is Matthew being ironic when Jesus tells his disciples that their righteousness must be greater than the Scribes and Pharisees?" (Matt 5:20). The first contact Jesus himself has with the Pharisees is when they question Jesus' disciples about Jesus' associating with tax collector and sinners. Jesus commands them to go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice' (Matt 9:13).

Here then, as Matthew completes the miracle stories, he gives a portent of the greater opposition Jesus will face from these Pharisees. Unlike the previous encounter which was with the disciples of Jesus and Jesus himself, it is open and very public hostility, the condemnation of Jesus' miracle as demonic. Soon we will see the escalated hostility in 12:2, 10, 14, and 24. Through the introduction of the Pharisees' first open charge, Matthew intends that the Pharisees are the most serious opponents of Jesus in Mt 8-9. Their doubtful attitude toward Jesus in 9:11 is now turning to a hostile one. If Jesus' attitude is thought negative (cf. Mt 9:11), any evaluation of his miracle cannot be positive. Even though the Pharisees do not deny Jesus' power of performing new miracles, they attribute it to the prince of the demons. Now two groups are being separated: with Jesus or against Jesus (Mt 12:30).

In sum, Matthew finishes this final miracle story with the report of the division of Israel's responses to Jesus' miracles in Matthew 8-9. Matthew redacted the two different responses to emphasize the result of Jesus' healing ministry in Mt 8-9. This division indicates the future of Jesus' ministry.

Conclusion of the Third Cluster

We can see that Matthew's intent was to reduce attention to Jesus and turn the attention to the responses to his great amazing power. We could now see how Matthew gradually moves to this special moment of acclamation. While grouping the stories in the cluster so that they do express the Messianic signs, he has built in a very gradual escalation of the response to Jesus. The astonishing raising of the dead girl is followed by Matthew's comment that the news about Jesus spread throughout that district. Again, after the private and astounding gift of sight to the two blind men, despite Jesus' command for silence about it, the two men are responsible for the news to spread throughout the district. The audience of the gospel realizes that Jesus' power cannot remain hidden. So in this last concluding miracle, the evangelist reduced the description of the miracle and placed the focus on the 'crowds' who witnessed this act of power. If the first and second miracle stories are secluded, the third is in the open and now indeed the people gathered are struck with amazement at Jesus. Their cry, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel," must be visualized as called out from multiple voices all around Jesus.

The view of the Pharisees against the recognition of Jesus' greatness by the crowd, both show the audience their vituperative character, just as John identified it in Matt 3:7:

a brood of vipers. Matthew prepares for their eventual decision to destroy Jesus (Matt 12:14), and by placing their radically opposite reaction to him right after his series of merciful healings and exorcisms, Matthew marks them as malicious and their judgments untrustworthy. He prepares the audience for the conflict that will arise in the future.

In sum, the three miracle stories of the third cluster may be summarized as being arranged progressively as follows:

The Third Cluster (9:18-34): Spread of Jesus' Fame

The 1st miracle story: The report about Jesus' miracle went out into that whole region without any prohibition from Jesus.

The 2nd miracle story: In spite of Jesus' stern prohibition, the two blind men went out and spread the news in that whole region.

The 3rd miracle story: Jesus' exorcisms cause the crowds to be amazed. This public miracle results in the people's crying that they have never seen this in Israel. While the Pharisees signal the conflict ahead, they claim this power is from the ruler of demons.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Summary

The present work purports to be a structural analysis of Matthew 8-9, using as interpretive instruments a writing technique, supposedly used by Matthew: Three Stage Progression. That is, it started with the methodology of the pre-supposed MTSP which is frequently found in the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter Three). Then, three clusters of miracle stories (Mt 8:1-17; 8:23-9:8; 9:18-34), which are separated by two intervening pericopae (Mt 8:16-22; 9:9-17), were analyzed to show how progressively they are arranged according to the technique of MTSP (Chapters Four, Five and Six). A careful analysis of the structure of Matthew 8-9 led to the following observations.

(1) The three clusters are arranged progressively according to the development of the story of Matthew 8-9. The nine miracle stories of Matthew 8-9 are not arranged randomly just to describe Jesus' deeds as an indispensable partner to Jesus' words in Mt 5-7. The main concern of Matthew 8-9 is the revelation of Jesus' identity. For this purpose, Matthew divided the nine miracle stories into three clusters of three according to the progressive development of the story. The divisions of these three clusters appear due to their separation by the two intervening pericopae (Mt 8:16-22; 9:9-17). The first cluster (Mt 8:1-17) describes Jesus as the healing Messiah of Isa 53:4. Jesus heals every disease he encounters without exception. In addition, his healing power is extraordinary

in that the healing is immediate and he can heal with his word at a distance. But Jesus is more than that. The second cluster (Mt 8:23-9:8) demonstrates Jesus' identity as 'Son of God.' The nature obeys Jesus' order, and the demons follow Jesus' direction without any resistance, calling Jesus 'Son of God.' In addition, Jesus himself proclaims his divine power of forgiving sins. The third cluster concludes the narrative section by emphasizing the spread of Jesus' news. As Jesus performs the messianic signs of raising the dead, opening the eyes of the blind and healing the deaf, the news about him is spreading wider and wider. Thus we can say that Matthew 8-9 has the structure of MTSP demonstrating a progressive development which reveals Jesus' identity.

(2) Each cluster also consists of three miracle stories which are arranged progressively according to each cluster's theme. Matthew's use of MTSP is not limited to the arrangement of three clusters. Matthew also shows a progressive arrangement of three miracles in each cluster.

(a) The three miracle stories of the first cluster are arranged progressively according to the objects of Jesus' mercy as the healing Messiah. Matthew demonstrates Jesus' mercy of touching a leper, which introduces the problem of purity (Mt 8:1-4); furthermore Jesus heals the servant of a Gentile centurion who is not the object of his healing ministry (Mt 8:5-13). Finally he heals the mother-in-law of Peter even without request (Mt 8:14-15). All those three miracle stories are arranged progressively with the emphasis on Jesus' being the merciful healing Messiah.

(b) The second cluster demonstrates Jesus' divinity through the progressive arrangement of the three stories. The first miracle story (Mt 8:23-27) intimates Jesus'

divinity by describing the obedience of the winds and sea to Jesus. The second miracle story (Mt 8:28-34) obviously reveals Jesus' identity as the Son of God through the mouth of the demons. The demons call Jesus 'Son of God' and follow Jesus' order without any resistance. The third story (Mt 9:1-8) confirms Jesus' divinity through his self-declaration that he has the authority to forgive sins. In the second cluster Jesus' divinity is emphasized progressively by the winds and sea, the demons and Jesus' self-proclamation.

(c) The three miracle stories of the third cluster also are arranged progressively. The first miracle story (Mt 9:18-26) simply describes the spread of the news that Jesus raised the dead. In the second miracle story (Mt 9:27-31), the two blind men spread Jesus' healing of their eyes in spite of Jesus' stern prohibition. Jesus knows the coming criticism of the Pharisees about his miracles. The final miracle story (Mt 9:32-34) points to the division of Israel about the news of Jesus' miracles. The progressive arrangement of the news about Jesus' miracles demonstrates how Jesus' early ministry results in the division of Israel.

(3) The two intervening pericopae help the coming theme of discipleship in Chapter Ten in the manner of progressive arrangement as well as the clear separation of the three clusters. The two intervening pericopae have two roles. First, their existence helps readers clearly distinguish each cluster. Without them, it would be difficult to understand how the nine miracle stories are arranged. Second, the two intervening pericopae strengthen the coming theme of the Mission Speech in Mt 10 with negative and positive examples of discipleship. Matthew shows two negative examples of discipleship through the cost of following Jesus. The disciples will be required to be

itinerant, poor and homeless. The two positive examples demonstrate unconventional disciples and unconventional discipleship. This discipleship is open to tax collectors and others who would be considered less than appropriate. Those two intervening narrative pericopae prepare for the Great Mission Speech in Matthew 10. Jesus' followers should do the same ministry with Jesus and expect persecution looming before them. Those three disciple-related passages (Matt 8:18-22; 9:9-17; 9:36-11:1) also seem to be arranged progressively.

(4) The conclusion of Matthew 8-9 shows the tight connection with the Sermon on the Mount as a pair, word and deed, in Jesus' early ministry. Actually, Mt 9:35, the conclusion of the clusters is actually an *inclusio* with Mt 4:23-24. That text reports the beginning of Jesus' ministry. From here the *inclusio* demonstrates Jesus' words in Mt 5-7 and his deeds in Mt 8-9 as closely related and building a sort of commentary on each other. Preaching, teaching and healing are the core of Jesus' early ministry. We will then notice how Jesus mandates exactly the same ministry to his disciples in Mt 10, which we note, also ends with the same mission of Jesus (11:1).

(5) Matthew 8-9 helps the development of Matthew's narration of Jesus' early ministry: It is the second stage of the MTSP structure which is found in the larger section, Matthew 5-10. Matthew's use of MTSP is not limited to Matthew 8-9. Mt 8-9 plays the role of the second stage of MTSP in the wider context of Mt 5-10. People begin to follow Jesus after his surprising teaching (Mt 5-7). Then, Jesus reveals his identity through his miracles. Although his news spread through the whole region, there is also a negative response to Jesus' miracles (Mt 8-9). Thus Jesus needs to mandate his disciples out into

the harvest. For this reason, we can say that Matt 8-9, is part of Mt 5-10, in which MTSP controls the progressive development of Jesus' early ministry. It does so in three stages.

As those observations reveal, Matthew 8-9 was carefully written with a well-organized structure. The MTSP structure of Matthew 8-9 with the wider context may be summarized as follows;

The MTSP Structure of Matthew 5-10

I. Jesus' Surprising Teaching on the Mount (Mt 5-7)

II. Revelation of Jesus' Identity through Various Miracles (Mt 8:1-9:35)

1. The First Cluster (Matthew 8:1-17): "Jesus, the Merciful Healing Messiah"

- A. The Healing of the Leper (Matt 8:1-4)
- B. The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (Matt 8:5-13)
- C. The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (Matt 8:14-15)
- * Conclusion: Matt 8:16-17

A. The First Intervening Pericopae (8:18-22)

- a. The Son of Man has no place to lay his head (8:18-20)
- b. Let the Dead bury their own dead (8:21-22)

2. The Second Cluster (Matthew 8:23-9:8): "Jesus, the Divine Being"

- A. The Calming of the Storm (Matt 8:23-27)
- B. The Healing of Demoniacs (Matt 8:28-34)
- C. The Healing of the Paralytic (Matt 9:1-8)

B. The Second Intervening Pericopae (9:9-17)

- a. I have come to call sinners (9:9-13)
- b. New wine into new wineskins (9:14-17)

3. The Third Cluster (Matthew 9:18-34): "The Spread of Jesus' News"

- A. A Daughter and A Woman (Matt 9:18-26)
- B. The Healing of Two Blind Men (Matt 9:27-31)
- C. The Healing of a Demoniac who was Mute (Matt 9:32-34)

* Conclusion of Matthew 8-9 (9:35)

III. Jesus' Sharing of His Ministry with His Disciples (Mt 9:36-11:1)

How MTSP Answers Current Scholarly Debates

Based upon the understanding of Matthew 8-9 as having the MTSP structure, we propose these answers to scholarly debates reviewed in the *Status Quaestionis*, Chapter One Introduction.

(1) The Grouping of Nine Markan and Q Miracle Stories in One Place

Generally Mt 8-9 has been explained as Jesus' deeds in contrast to Jesus' word in Mt 5-7. But this explanation does not sufficiently reflect the intention of Matthew in his collection of nine miracle stories in one place. By sacrificing the more natural context of the Markan text, Matthew created a new context. To emphasize the progressive revelation of Jesus' identity, he gathered and classified the nine miracle stories of Mt 8-9 into three ascending clusters: (1) Jesus as the healing Messiah of Isa 53:4, (2) Jesus as the Son of God, and (3) the spread of the news about Jesus. In addition, to emphasize the theme of each cluster, Matthew needed three miracle stories arranged progressively for each cluster. Thus, Matthew needed exactly nine miracle stories for his MTSP structure in Mt 8-9. For this purpose Matthew selected seven miracle stories from Mark (Mk 1:40-45; 1:29-31, 32-34; 5:1-20, 2:1-12; 5:21-43; 10:46-52) and two miracle stories from Q ([Lk] 7:1-10; 11:14-16). Then these nine miracle stories were progressively re-arranged into three clusters and into three stories in each cluster according to their contents without considering the original context of the nine miracle stories. Therefore the nine miracle stories have the tight link and the close relationship of each two consecutive miracle stories in Mt 8-9. This close relationship shows how carefully Matthew organized the nine miracle stories of Mt 8-9 and how successful his intention was in revealing Jesus'

identity as the early phase of Jesus' ministry.

(2). Matthew's Redactional Intent in Moving Miracles from Markan Order?

While Matthew was generally faithful to the Markan text, he did not follow Mark in organizing the order of the events. Matthew's concern was to allow the miracles to serve his interpretive plan. It is probable that Matthew could not see a particular plan in Mark's order of the miracle stories, and most scholars would agree that the order of the miracle stories in Mark is not particularly significant. For Matthew, the reordering would have a strong teaching as a result, and each cluster would have its message. The first cluster emphasizes Jesus' mercy as the healing Messiah. The healing story of a leper (Mk 1:40-45) was located at the beginning because it shows Jesus' respect of the Torah which was emphasized in the Sermon on the Mount. Even though the rule of purity did not stop him from touching of the leper, Jesus has made it clear in the Sermon on the Mount that he reverences the Torah. In this case, he demonstrates how compassion must be chosen over rules of purity. Mercy in fact is the best fulfillment of the law. In the second cluster, the healing story of the paralytic (Mk 2:1-12) was placed at the end of the cluster and there would function as a climax in conveying Jesus' divine power, as seen in the authority he displays in forgiving sins which in turn is proven by his healing of the paralytic. The third cluster has an order not easy to identify. The focus at the end is on the witnesses to the miracle. In this first mention of the crowds' response to Jesus, Matthew begins the story of Jesus gradual fame. At the same time the condemnatory accusation of the Pharisees that Jesus is in collusion with Beelzebul prepares the listener for their subsequent plans to destroy him. Those examples explain well why Matthew

arranged the nine miracle stories in the present order rather than in the Markan order.

(3) How May we Better Understand Matthew's Redaction of Markan Texts?

Matthew's concern in Mt 8-9 was not the vividness of each miracle story; instead he focused on the person of Jesus: the revelation of his identity. In most cases Matthew abbreviated the introduction and detailed description of the events so that the miracle stories might focus on Jesus. It is natural for Matthew to abbreviate the secondary features of the miracle stories because detailed explanation of each miracle story would make his focus less clear. Matthew's goal in Mt 8-9 is to reveal Jesus' identity as the healing Messiah and as the Son of God through Jesus' miracle activities. Any factors that disturbed this goal were removed or reduced remarkably through the redaction.

It must be noted, however, that Matthew sometimes added some important messages to the abbreviated texts to emphasize his intention. One outstanding example is the addition of the spread of the news about Jesus to the ends of three miracle stories of the third cluster. This observation is critical in understanding the theme of the third cluster. This common addition of the same message clearly reveals Matthew's intention in the third cluster. Jesus' revelation of his identity through the miracles has brought positive responses from Israel's people; but at the same time negative responses also raised up from the Pharisees who were not satisfied with Jesus' association with the sinners. This division of opinion provides a very important turning point in the plot of the following story.

(4) How is Matthew's Use of Doublets Made Clearer?

The use of doublets shows that Matthew had a particular intent in the repetition.

It is not sufficient to explain away the doublets that Matthew uses in Mt 8-9 as only used to emphasize the Messianic fulfillment of the Messianic signs in Mt 11:5. Close examination show that Matthew dramatically abbreviated them and then added texts to serve the purpose of the cluster. Given a different context, each doublet has its own message.

Applications of the MTSP Structure

(1) Christology vs. Discipleship (or Ecclesiology)

It is not strange that Mt 8-9 has been frequently understood from the viewpoint of ecclesiology since there has been misunderstanding of the two intervening pericopae (Mt 8:16-22; 9:9-17). Clearly the main concern of the intervening pericopae is discipleship, but this theme has not been clearly distinguished from that of the nine miracle stories due to the complexity of the structure of Mt 8-9. For example, due to the influence of the first intervening pericopae on discipleship (Mt 8:18-22), Bornkamm understood discipleship as Matthew's theme for the Stilling of the Storm (Mt 8:23-27), describing it as "a kerygmatic paradigm of the danger and glory of discipleship".¹ Once the miracle story is separated from its cluster, one can understand that such an application seems sound. This dissertation, Chapter Two, has already reviewed the ways in which this emphasis on the discipleship theme often resulted in artificial and strained interpretations when the content of the miracle did not seem to address that theme.

If one follows the MTSP analysis, the nine miracle stories have Christological themes alone. The theological intention of Matthew 8-9 (especially Mt 8:18-9:34 which are frequently classified as having the theme of discipleship or ecclesiology) must be

¹ Bornkamm, "Stilling of the Storm," 57.

approached from the context (i.e., in the flow of the story) not from the paradigmatic viewpoint (i.e., from a form-critical approach of miracle stories). Matthew did not simply collect miracle stories in a group to emphasize discipleship; instead he narrates Jesus' miracle stories in their clusters to create the statement about Jesus' person in a clear way. These three statements, drawn from the three clusters would be: Jesus as the healing Messiah prophesied in Isa 53:4; Jesus, the Son of God which was already announced by God at Jesus' baptism (Mt 3:17; 4:3); and the recognition of Jesus as Unique in all Israel. That final cluster ends with something of a portent of the Pharisees clash with Jesus. We recall that Matthew identifies the Pharisees as the targets of John the Baptist's vehement address: "Brood of vipers." The Pharisees accuse Jesus of deriving his power to exorcize from the ruler of demons. The negative response from the Pharisees provides then a turning point to Jesus' ministry: conflict between Jesus and Israel. Thus we can say that Matthew did not digress from his story with the collection of the miracle stories. On the contrary, he continues his presentation of Jesus' early ministry using the miracle stories as a tool of revealing Jesus' identity without any interruption of the story. Thus there is no room for discipleship (or ecclesiology) in the miracle stories. The miracle stories in Mt 8-9 are perfectly focusing on Christology: Jesus as the healing Messiah and the Son of God.

(2) Narrative vs. Discourse

Since the appearance of B. W. Bacon's influential book *Studies in Matthew* in 1930, the structure of the Gospel of Matthew has been frequently concentrated on the repeated pattern of narratives and discourses. Because Matthew hugely expanded the Q

speeches and joined them with Markan material into five notable blocks, many scholars have concluded that Matthew wished to create a Christian Torah. Closer study has caused some scholars to suppose that Matthew's gospel was deliberately organized into alternative collections of narrative and discourse. Using that model, Matthew 8-9 has been assigned as the narrative following the discourse of Mt 5-7. Sometime, Matthew 8-9 is considered the narrative with Matt 10 the discourse. For the divisions between word and deed, Mt 5-7 is the part of Jesus' word while Mt 8-9 is the part of Jesus' deeds.

The problem is that these analyses do not reflect a special intention of Matthew. We can say that the core of Jesus' early ministry is teaching and healing (Mt 4:24; 9:35; 11:1), of course. It is clear for example that generally speaking the key message of Jesus is that the heavenly kingdom has come. The proclamation takes its credibility though from Jesus' person, and significance, and here is where the miracle clusters have answered that need. Jesus' authority to teach is undergirded by the affirmation of him as the healing messiah and the Son of God as revealed in the miracle stories. The teachings of Matt 5-7 are supported. So it is not sufficient to claim that Matthew organized his material into words and deeds, or to divide it into discourse and narrative. Applying the MTSP structure, the relationship between Mt 5-7 and 8-9 is progressive. If Mt 5-7 describes the surprising teaching of Jesus which the crowds have never heard before, Mt 8-9 demonstrates Jesus' authority as the healing Messiah and as the Son of God. Thus the relation between these two passages is not peripheral but ascending. The close relationship between Mt 8-9 and 10 also supports this understanding. Jesus' sharing of his ministry with his disciples is the result of the division of Israel about Jesus' miracles. Due

to this division, the disciples should expect persecution looming before them. Thus in the MTSP structure of Mt 5-10, there is a wholeness, and a smoothness that Matthew has created. We do not see something as stiff as grouping discourses and then narratives.

In sum, the MTSP structure shows that Matthew did not separate narratives and discourses as different parts in the story; instead he regarded discourses as part of narratives.

(3) Son of Man as the Heavenly Figure in Dan 7:13-14

Unlike Mark, Matthew has sequenced his use of his sources and redaction so that the miracle story of Healing a Paralytic (Mt 9: 1-6) makes plain the divine attribution that belongs to the title Son of Man for Matthew. In the Markan gospel, the sense of Jesus' divine authority as the heavenly figure of Dan 7:13ff is seen only in the trial reference in Mk 14:62. Other uses of Son of Man largely relate to Jesus' humanity. Matthew, however, develops Jesus' divine identity as the fulfillment of Dan 7:13-14 from the beginning. The first reference (Mt 8:20 //Q 9:58) conveys the sense of the vulnerability of Jesus, which is certainly found in Mark as well. But in Mt 9:6 which is the climax of the second cluster, Matthew asserts the full dimension of the Son of Man as the heavenly figure of Dan 7:13-14 by bringing the phrase 'on earth (ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς)' before 'to forgive sins (ἀφιεῖναι ἁμαρτίας)' from the end of the clause.² While this text affirms Jesus' divine authorization as Son of Man on earth through his mouth, the third usage of this title in Mt 10:23 asserts his role as the Son of Man coming down from heaven as the final Judge. This progressive sequence shows Matthew's understanding of this title. For Matthew the title Son of Man obviously contains the divine attribution.

² Gundry, *Matthew*, 164.

(4) Chiasm vs. MTSP

Although Matthew has been analyzed frequently from the viewpoint of chiasm, this effort has not been successful as we have seen in Chapter Two, History of Research. The main reason for this failure is the imbalance between the chiasmic form and the content. The formal unity does not reflect the content so many times; what should be the pivotal point given the author's chiasmic structure is a point that is plainly not the central message. As we believe MTSP has shown persuasively, the form and content coincide. In other words, the approach to Matthew seems to meet the natural flow of the story. Matthew seems to be arranging his material in progressive arrangements of three. Here, the ordinary and ubiquitous use of three as an organizing principle does not make Matthew's arrangement either a surprise, or one foreign to his first century listeners. If we consider the popularity of 'threeness' in the ancient world, MTSP has the strong point in explaining the author's intention (i.e., theological explanation of the story).

Suggestions for Future Study

There has never been any attempt to analyze Mt 8-9 from the viewpoint of Matthew's Three Stage Progression. While many scholars have recognized Matthew's tendency to structure material in threes, they have not tested the groupings to see if a progression of theme is observable. With respect to the miracle stories, we have shown escalation underway. This has resulted in far more success than the other methods that have been used to explain Matthew's structuring by threes.

First, this is only the first examination of Matthew's triadic structures for the way he intended them to serve a progression of the gospel. What we have identified as

MTSP requires more and extended examination of how it might be supported in other collections, and indeed in the structure of the gospel itself.

Second, this writing technique can be found in a multitude of literary forms in ancient world, Greek, Hellenistic, Roman and Jewish. The variety of ways in which three is used to organize information and communication almost allows one to say that it comes easily no matter where one lives or when. Because research about the triadic structures has been done in a great many areas, this analysis deserves to be among those organizational methods tested when analyzing the compositions of ancient authors. With regard to the Matthean gospel analyses, we can say that any other methods have not been effective.

In sum, it is very probable that the Three Stage Progression writing technique was widely used whether in the western or eastern literature. Further study of it and testing for its use by New Testament narrators is a new and promising endeavor.

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